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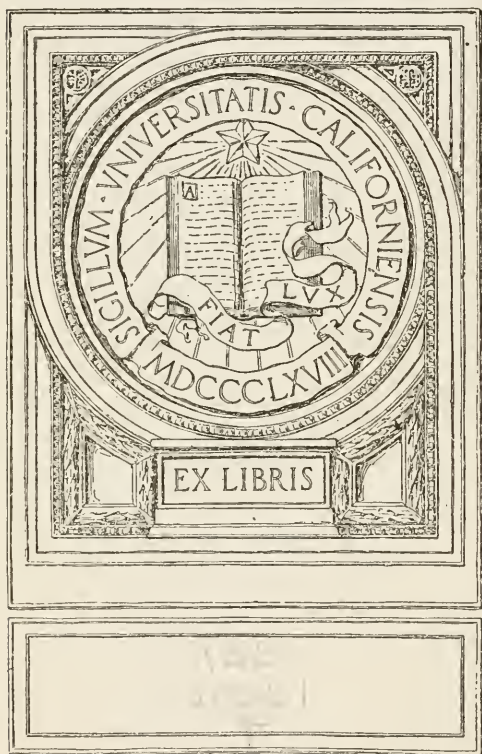
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PEGGY WARE

H. W. HOWARD

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PEGGY WARE

BY

M. W. HOWARD

Four Years Congressman from Alabama,
Author of "If Christ Came to Congress,"
Etc.



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CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I.	CHRISTMAS IN THE CUMBERLAND MOUNTAINS - - - - -	7
II.	CHRISTMAS IN BUCKS POCKET - -	22
III.	EARTH TO EARTH - - - -	33
IV.	THE UNWELCOME STRANGERS - -	48
V.	THE NEW LIFE BEGINS - - -	63
VI.	PEGGY FOLLOWS HER VISION - -	76
VII.	CLIFF ANDERSON ATTENDS A FIGHT -	85
VIII.	THE MYSTERIOUS MAN FROM NOWHERE	101
IX.	THE WILD CATTER SURRENDERS -	118
X.	A MAN WITHOUT A NAME - -	129
XI.	THE MIND BUILDER AT WORK - -	142
XII.	SEEKING REST AND FINDING NONE -	152
XIII.	THE AWAKENING - - - -	161
XIV.	BACK TO THE OLD HOME - - -	176
XV.	THE LONESOME FOLKS - - -	197
XVI.	BEHOLD WHAT A FLAME A LITTLE SPARK KINDLETH - - - - -	212
XVII.	THE SLACKERS' RENDEZVOUS - -	234
XVIII.	THE SURRENDER - - - -	253
XIX.	CLIFF ANDERSON ENTERS POLITICS -	283
XX.	PEGGY GOES TO WASHINGTON - -	306
XXI.	PEGGY'S GETHSEMANE - - -	323
XXII.	CHRIST LIVETH IN ME - - -	338

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CHAPTER ONE

CHRISTMAS IN THE CUMBERLAND MOUNTAINS

“OH, Uncle Simon, do come up to the house this minute, and see Peggy wearing mama’s wedding dress. It’s the finest dress you ever saw, and Peggy is just beautiful in it!”

Ralph Ware was all excitement and enthusiasm, as he stood in the door of Simon’s cabin, located in one corner of the yard.

Ralph was just ten, with big brown eyes, dark curly hair, and a chubby face.

“I’se pow’ful busy, lettle boy,” said Simon, “but I ain’t seed dat dress sence your mammy wore it at her weddin’, an’ I’ll jest lay my work down fer a lettle while an’ run up to de big house wid you.”

“What are you making, Uncle Simon?” asked Ralph, looking at the great pile of shavings that littered Simon’s floor and hearth.

“Lettle boys musn’t ax questions, ’specially long erbout Christmas eve. You know dat it wus on Christmas eve dat curiosity killed de cat what you allus heerd erbout.”

“Did curiosity really kill him, Uncle Simon?”

“Wall, dat’s whut dey allus tell me, but I don’t think it killed him more’n seben times, an’ den de cat learn to min’ his own business, an’ he still hab two more libes lef’ an’ he know how to behave hisself.”

By this time they had reached the "big house," as Simon designated the double log house in which the Wares lived, and Simon was cut short in his dissertation about cats.

"Come in, Simon," said Mrs. Ware, "and tell me if you recognize this dress. It has been hidden away for many years, but Peggy discovered it today, and insisted on trying it on."

"Corse I membahs it, Young Missus, an' I membahs de day you an' Massa Ware wus married at de big church weddin'. You wus de belle ob Shenandoah Valley, an' I wus so proud ob you as you stood up long side ob Massa Ware, young an' hansum, an' you lookin lak a queen."

"Tell us all about it, Uncle Simon," cried Ralph and Virginia in chorus. "We want to hear about our beautiful mother when she was a girl back in Virginia."

"Did you know her when she was a little teensy baby?" asked Virginia, the youngest member of the Ware family. "Did she look like me?"

"Don't ask so many questions, 'Cotton Top'," exclaimed Ralph. "Of course she didn't look like you, because your hair is white and your eyes are as blue as the sky in June, while Mamma's hair is as black as a crow, and her eyes are just like mine," he proudly asserted.

"Answerin' yore fust question, Virginia, I knowed yore mothah when I could hold her out on one han', an' I knowed her mothah an' her fathah."

Virginia had climbed upon Simon's knee and settled down comfortably for the story that she and Ralph had heard from the old man's lips a hundred times. To them it was always a new story, and grew more wonderful with each repetition.

A big log fire burned in the wide-mouthed chimney, and Peggy and her mother took their seats to listen to the story that Peggy loved quite as well as Ralph and Virginia.

"I belonged to Cap'n Lee befo' de wah," the old man began. "He was yore gran'pa. He was a cousin ob General Robert E. Lee, an' de Lees, you know, had de fines' blood in ol' Virginny, an' dat's sayin' sumpin', case Virginny got de fines' blood in de worl'." The old man straightened himself up proudly as he delivered this statement with an air that would have made contradiction presumptuous.

"Yassum, it's de shore 'stocracy blood, an' wharevah you fin' it in de Carolinas, Georgia, Tennessee, an' Alabama, you kin allus tell de Virginny blood."

"Are you a Lee, Uncle Simon?" asked Virginia earnestly.

The old man scratched his head, frowned, and thought very hard. "Ob cose I'se a Lee," he said finally, "my name is Simon Lee, an' I libed wid de Lees so long dat I des nachelly got 'noculated wid de Lee blood. Dat's why I allus tells lettle boys an' gals to 'sociate wid none but quality."

"Well, I heard my papa say that his folks were 'poor white trash' before the war," ventured Ralph. "What did he mean by that?"

"Wall, befo' de wah, honey, all we niggers dat belong to white folks got stuck up an' thought we wus bettah dan de white folks dat don't own no niggers, an' we call dem 'po' white trash,' an' we sorter looked down on dem. But when de wah come yore gran'-daddy Ware fought long side ob yoah gran'daddy Lee, an' dey wus bofe killed in Virginny, an' when dey wus brought home dey wus buried in de same grabe yahd, side by side.

"Yoah gran'pa Lee lef' a big plantation wid thousans ob acres ob lan' an' joinin' it yoah gran'pa Ware lef' about a hundred acres. De niggers use to laugh an' say he des had enough lan' to make a turnip patch. But when de wah wus ovah an' de slabes freed an' mos' ob dem gone yoah gran'ma Ware's place wus wuth des erbout as much as yoah gran'ma Lee's place, 'case dey warn't nobody to cultivate nothin' 'cept little patches scattahed heah an' dah.

"Wall, yoah gran'mas wus de bes' frens in de worl'. Dey bofe wove dey own cloth an' made de jeans fer de men an' de linsey fer de winmin, an' dey warn't no moah po' white trash aftah de wah. Ev'ry tub stood on its own bottom, an' ef you had de blood it didn't make no diffe'nce wheatha you owned slabes befo' de wah 'r not.

"Yoah gran'ma Ware and yoah gran'pa Ware had des as good blood as anybody evah had dat warn't a Lee, an' when yoah ma married Massa Wilbur Ware, I said dey nevah wus no finah blood jined.

"An' it wus de right sort ob marriage, too, 'case dey had knowed one nother sence dey knowed anythin', an' dey had lubed one another all dey lives, an' God done jined dem togethah in heaben' befo dey wus pronounced man an' wife by de preacher."

"Was my father a preacher when he got married?" asked Ralph.

"Yes, chile, he wus de likelies' young preacher in de Shenandoah Valley. He wus des home frum a big 'ological school in Boston, an' he brought a whole wagon load ob dem 'ological books wid him. Dey up in dem shelves now, an' erbout a thousan' more dat he bought sence den."

"Well, I ain't never going to be no preacher," declared Ralph, "because preacher's can't have any fun."

"Wall, I ain't gwine to 'scuss dat now," said Simon thoughtfully. "I think they mout an' again they mout-ent. I ain't sayin' what I thinks, 'cept this: On Christmus eve de whol' worl' ought to be happy, even de preachers."

"It seems to me, Simon, that the preachers ought to be the happiest people in the world," said Peggy, "for they are doing such a noble work in ministering to the distressed and needy and leading people into the light of truth."

"At least we shall try to feel this way about it to-day," said Peggy's mother, "for this should be the gladdest, happiest time of all the year. Our Savior came to the world at this time, hence we call it Christmas. He came to give the world its greatest Christmas gift, the gift of the life of joy, peace, and abundance, and we, in our poor way, make gifts to each other, trying to emulate the Christ spirit."

"I don't like Christmas," spoke a harsh voice, and all turned toward Wilbur Ware, who had entered the house without being observed.

Peggy rose to offer her father a chair, and he observed that she wore her mother's wedding dress. His face softened for an instant. "Ah, your mother's wedding dress. How beautiful you are in it, my child, but not more beautiful than your mother was the day she wore it, nor more beautiful than she is now," he said gently as he walked over to the corner where his wife sat and pressed a kiss on her cheek.

As he did so, he observed that her cheeks were flushed and her eyes unusually bright, shining like dew drops after a Spring shower. A fit of coughing seized her, but she laughed musically, saying she had taken a slight cold, but that she would be entirely well by morning and able to attend church with the family.

Wilbur Ware, Peggy and Simon were greatly distressed about her condition, and a dagger thrust to their hearts could not have given them keener pain than this soul-racking cough of the one they loved, a victim of the great white plague.

Peggy assumed a gaiety she did not feel, for in her heart there was a great fear that some impending disaster hung over the Ware home.

Resuming his conversation, Ware said: "No, I don't like Christmas. It is the saddest season of the year, for me. I always feel my poverty more keenly at Christmas than at any other time, for I am unable to give presents to the members of my family and to others who are in need."

"Wall, I got to go down to de cabin an' finish a little whittlin' befo' bed time," said Simon, "an' I 'spect I bettah be gwine."

"We are going to have roasted sweet potatoes and sweet milk for supper, Simon, with lots of good butter to put on our potatoes," said Ralph. "Don't you want to come up and eat your supper?"

"Do come, Simon," urged Peggy and her mother.

"Dat's a Christmas eve supper fitten fer a king," said the old man, smacking his lips. "Day ain't but one thing to make it bettah, an' dat would be a good fat possum, an' ef Ralph will borry a good possum dog, we'll ketch one afo' Miss Peggy goes back to college."

Peggy had been home a week from college, and she had been busy assisting her mother in making some clothing for Ralph and Virginia from some of her outgrown garments. These, with warm woolen socks her mother had knit for her father and Simon, were to be hung on a Christmas tree that Simon had ready in an adjoining room. There were also some cakes and homemade candy for Ralph and Virginia hidden in

Simon's cabin. The shavings on Simon's floor were made by his jackknife, with which he was an expert. From pieces of soft timber he had whittled many wonderful toys for the two younger members of the family.

Peggy was now sixteen, and had completed a two years' course at college. She had an unusual mind that seemed to know things without being taught. Stored away in her subconscious or superconscious mind was a fountain of knowledge and wisdom that she was apparently able to tap at will.

She was the pride of her teachers, and would have been envied by her fellow pupils but for her unusual personality that made every one love her and glad to have her excel.

She had been given a scholarship at the college because her father was a minister, and on account of her superior gifts, but it had entailed untold privations and sacrifices on the part of each member of the Ware family to supply the small amount of money required for Peggy's board and clothing.

In fact, it would have been impossible but for the help of old Simon. His devotion to Peggy was almost divine, and he had insisted on "hiring out" to work on a near-by farm, where he received a certain wage and his "grub." Every dollar had been turned over to Wilbur Ware for Peggy. Simon even refused to buy a pair of shoes, when his old ones could no longer be mended. He said he preferred going barefoot so his "cawns could git well."

Peggy, although she had devoured all the books in the college library on science, philosophy, and the history of the various religions, was not the typical bookworm. She was full of a healthy enthusiasm, and was a leader in all college sports. She was the soul and

center of all the activities of the student body, and no movement was complete without Peggy Ware.

Her hair was an unusual golden shade, her eyes blue as sapphire, and as she looked earnestly at you, you could never penetrate their depths.

"Miss Peggy's eyes des lak a pool in de woods what ain't got no bottom," old Simon was wont to say when referring to her.

"The sweet potatoes are done," declared Ralph as he removed them from their bed of hot ashes and coals. "I will go and call Simon."

"Lawd, you don' need to call me, chil'," the old man exclaimed gleefully as he came in, brushing the snow from his coat. "I done heerd dem sweet taters callin' clean down to de cabin. It's snowin' pow'ful hard, an' I 'spect de groun' will be covered in de mawnin'."

"If it is, you'll have to carry me on your back, Simon, to church," said Virginia.

"Dat I will," said Simon. "I toted Peggy, Ralph and you when you wus lettle, an' I toted yoah ma, an' lettle Florence when she was heah."

A look of suffering passed over Wilbur Ware's face at the mention of Florence, which was not unobserved by Peggy and her mother.

"I've fixed you a plate in this warm corner, Simon, where you can eat your supper while we sit at the table," said Peggy.

"I'se so happy, so happy!" exclaimed the old man, "that you'se all well, got a wahn house to lib in, plenty to eat, an' Miss Peggy, de smartes' gal in college, heah wid us to enjoy it all."

"And I thank God for you, Simon," said Mrs. Ware. "You have been the most faithful soul in the world, and I love you. We all love you with a love that is too great for words. When the war was over and

you were free to go where you pleased, you remained with my mother and watched over me. When I married and my mother had passed on, you left everything and followed our fortunes without hope of reward. You never thought of self in your younger days, and now you are old and penniless, and we are almost as poor in this world's goods. I know God will reward you when He calls you home, for you certainly lost your life in your thought of others."

"I don' hab to die to git my rewahd, Young Missus," the old man declared reverently. "I don' been gittin' it all de time. An' I don't hab to die to go to Hebin nethah, 'case dis is Hebin right heah. I libes in Hebin' all de time, an' I don't much believe dat you gwine to walk right slap bang into Hebin when you gits obah yondah, onless you takes yore Hebin wid you."

"I think you are right, Simon" said Peggy.

Her father frowned. "That is poor theology, Simon," he said. "I don't think you and Peggy know what you are talking about. In my sermon tomorrow, I shall try to set you right."

Neither Peggy nor Simon replied, Simon realizing his own ignorance, and Peggy unwilling to argue with her father.

There was a vacant chair at the table, a child's chair, with a white oak splint bottom. It was given to Florence, the first born of the Ware children, by an old blind man who made chairs for a living. It was guarded sacredly and never brought from its place of seclusion except on the night before Christmas. No one made any reference to the little chair during the progress of the meal, but each knew that it was uppermost in each other's thoughts.

Early in the evening, Ralph and Virginia began to manifest by yawns and nods a desire to seek their

beds. They felt that in some way the hours would pass more quickly if they were asleep. Their mother, remembering how she had felt at their age under similar circumstances, suggested to her husband that the children be allowed to go to bed.

Then, as was his custom, the minister took his well-thumbed Bible from its resting place, and read the beautiful twenty-third Psalm, after which they all knelt devoutly and offered their thanks to God.

When Ralph and Virginia were sound asleep, the others sat by the great wood fire as the hickory logs burned into glowing coals, the flames forming fantastic shapes and figures, depending on the mood and fancy of the beholder.

For a long time no word was spoken, each knowing the thing nearest the other's heart, and yet hesitating to begin a discussion of the subject that all knew was inevitable.

At last the silence was broken by Wilbur Ware, and his voice was unusually hard and hopeless. "Sixteen years ago tomorrow this little chair was left vacant when some fiend cruelly stole our little Florence. For years I searched for her all over the country from Richmond to Atlanta, Chattanooga, and Nashville. Something kept telling me that she was alive and that I would find her. I could not understand how a good and merciful God could be so cruel as to take our darling away from us. As time went on my faith waned, and now I have long ceased to hope. God has hidden His face from me, and I am groping in the dark. All the old foundations upon which I built while at the Theological Seminary, and upon which I have stood since, seem to be crumbling beneath me. I used to think that love was God's predominating characteristic; but He is also powerful in vengeance, and it is the

vengeance of the Lord visited on me for my sins. It is to teach me to fear Him, and to show me that I am but a poor, creeping worm of the dust.

"And yet, there are times," the now deeply agitated minister exclaimed, as he paced the floor, his eyes blazing, his fists clinched, his breast heaving, "when I almost hate him!"

Suddenly he stopped, frightened, horrified that he should have dared to give utterance to such blasphemy, and sank into his chair, the tears following the deep lines of suffering down his weather-beaten cheeks, while his massive form was rocked by the inward tempest.

His wife, also weeping sympathetically, placed her arms lovingly about him, while Peggy knelt at his feet, holding one of his great, bony hands in her two soft, warm ones, smiling through her tears, while Simon covertly drew his red bandana handkerchief from his pocket and applied it vigorously to his eyes, saying, "My ole eyes are gittin' so pow'ful bad, I think I will have to buy a pair of specs." At this Peggy laughed heartily and said:

"Simon, I think I need some specs, too!"

Gradually the tempest of doubt, of lack of faith in God raging in Wilbur Ware's soul began to subside, and Mrs. Ware, her face illumined until all looked at her awe-stricken, as though she were some ancient prophetess just stepped down from the skies, exclaimed:

"Wilbur, I see a vision too big for utterance. It is so great that it overwhelms me, and in its presence I stand on holy ground, for in the midst of the vision I see God. And He is guiding us.

"I am near the end of my journey, but a great work lies before the rest of you. There will be much suffering, much anguish, but in the end you will all really

find God, for He is beckoning. And you will find our dear child. I see her alive and well, and some day there will be a happy family reunion, and my spirit will be there to rejoice with you."

As she ceased talking, all were silent. They felt an unusual presence and power, and stood in awe of something they did not understand.

Quietly Simon stole out to his cabin as Peggy kissed her father and mother good-night and climbed the stairway to the attic room, leaving them with clasped hands, looking into the glowing coals.

Early Christmas morning Ralph and Virginia were peeping out of the window for the first streak of dawn when they discovered that a heavy snow had fallen during the night. Their shouts of delight aroused the entire household, and all were soon gathered about the great fire that Simon had slipped in and built while every one slept.

Soon the door of the other room opened and Santa Claus appeared and announced that he was ready to distribute the presents on the Christmas tree. His long white beard and funny wig so disguised him that Ralph and Virginia did not recognize him until all the presents had been distributed, and he produced his banjo and began to pick one of Simon's favorite jigs and to dance to the music. Then they knew it was dear old "Uncle Simon." They took off his long beard and funny wig, screaming with delight at discovering that Simon had rubbed flour on his face until it was white. Banteringly they said: "Simon, why did you make your face white?" To which he replied:

"Huh, who ever seen a nigger Santa Claus?"

When the hour arrived for going to church, Mrs. Ware wanted to accompany the family, but all protested that the walk through the snow would be too

much for her, so she reluctantly consented to remain at home.

Peggy, walking beside her father, followed by Ralph, striding proudly by himself, Simon with Virginia perched on his shoulder, bringing up the rear, formed the little procession that took up its march to the mountain church a mile away, Mrs. Ware watching from the window until it had wound its way over the hill.

In the church there was an assembly of typical mountaineers who had sat under the theological preaching of Wilbur Ware for the past five years. He had come to them from one of the largest churches in Knoxville. Just why no one seemed to know. Uncomplainingly and unquestioningly his wife, children, and Simon had followed him, and endured without a murmur the hardships and privations of their new environment.

In his search for his lost child in previous years he had spent a few days in the wild recesses of the Cumberland Mountains, and as his thoughts became more and more introspective, he felt drawn back to this out of the way place.

It was five years ago that he finally lost all hope of finding Florence, and with hope dead he desired to get away from the world, so that he would be able to devote more of his time to his theological studies. He had accumulated one of the largest theological libraries in the South, depriving himself and family of many of life's comforts so that he could buy the precious books containing the thoughts, beliefs, and interpretations of other men's minds.

His sermons to the little mountain church would have made him famous if they had been delivered as lectures in some great theological school; but to his

hearers they had little meaning, and they accepted all he said as being true. He officiated at weddings and funerals, but always his discourses were as cold as icicles, and his words like the chill of the winter winds.

This mental and spiritual attitude of her husband had caused his wife great sorrow, and in secret she had poured out her heart to God for him.

Peggy had been away at college most of the time for two years, so that she was not wholly prepared for the sermon her father delivered on this Christmas morning. She had played the little, old, squeaky organ and sang Sankey's beautiful song, "The Ninety and Nine," while the audience sat spell bound under the magic of the beautiful words of the song as interpreted by Peggy. Many of her auditors whose lives had been hard, cold, and barren, were moved to tears, while her father's face showed a great struggle of contending emotions.

His sermon came like an icy blast following an April shower, and the buds of tender emotions froze into icicles, even as they burst into full bloom.

"Vanity, vanity, all is vanity, and vexation of spirit," said the preacher, and a shudder ran through the audience.

"Man is doomed to a life of sorrow and woe, and when he is cut down, must go before an angry, but just God, to give an account for the sins of the flesh.

"We are born in sin, and shapen in iniquity, and are all on the road to hell; and nothing but the blood of Jesus can save us from the wrath of a sin-avenging God. I warn you that unless you believe in the power of the blood to cleanse from sin, 'you will be lost and lost through all eternity.' And if you are not washed in the blood you will spend eternity crying 'Lost! lost! lost!' but God will turn a deaf ear to your cries."

Peggy sat horrified, a feeling of fear clutching at her heart.

At the conclusion of the sermon, her father announced the closing hymn, "Hark, from the tombs a doleful sound," but Peggy shook her head mournfully when he requested her to lead the singing.

In a hard, unsympathetic voice, the preacher sang the first line of the hymn, a few of the older members of the congregating joining in from time to time, in wailing, discordant tones as he "lined the hymn."

Peggy sat with bowed head, a great pity in her soul, and a strong, almost irresistible desire to tell her father and the assembled people about God's love and God's mercy.

The service concluded, Wilbur Ware strode solemnly from the church, few caring to come near or to speak to him. Scarcely had he departed from the room until a great change came over the audience; with one accord they rushed to greet Peggy, the female members smothering her with kisses and embraces. Spring had burst again. The bleak winter wind of a few minutes ago was forgotten, and Peggy's smile, her musical voice, her warm handclasp, her soul speaking through her eyes, had in one wonderful moment brought the Kingdom of Heaven right into their midst, and in that moment some of them felt a presence that they could not explain; but Peggy could have told them that it was God, "nearer to them than hands or feet."

It was a long time before Peggy could tear herself away from the heart-hungry people, but with a promise that she would be with them on the following Sunday she finally made her escape in the midst of many "good-byes" and "God bless you's."

Simon, Ralph, and Virginia were waiting for her on the outside. In answer to her eager inquiry she was

told that her father was impatient and had gone on home.

Joyfully they followed the trail now beaten out in the snow; Ralph marching proudly by the side of "Big Sis," as he fondly called Peggy, while Simon, with Virginia in her accustomed place on his shoulder, kept step in the rear.

As they approached the home, Peggy was seized by some indefinable dread. She ceased to respond to the prattle of the children. Her face became ashen and her limbs trembled until she felt that they would not sustain her as she moved at a rapid pace; Simon kept close beside her, he too feeling some impending disaster.

When they arrived at the gate, they heard a strange voice, now hoarse and angry, and anon broken and pleading. They stopped in fear. What could it mean? Who was this stranger, and where was father? They listened for their mother's voice, but it was not to be heard. Then an awful thing happened. The man inside the house began to curse God, and they heard him say:

"If there is a God, I hate him! I hate him! for he not only took my little Florence away from me, but now he has taken my precious wife."

They did not wait to hear more, but rushed into the house. On the bed lay the mother, a beautiful smile parting her lips, the roses still in her cheeks, her eyes gently closed, the long, beautiful lashes covering them for the long sleep, while Wilbur Ware crouched on the floor, with the look of some desperately wounded wild animal in his face, his hair dishevelled, his eyes blood-shot, the veins in his neck and forehead swollen and black as though about to burst.

Ralph and Virginia standing in the presence of death for the first time did not recognize him, but called piteously for "mother," while Peggy, overcome with the greatest sorrow of her life, kissed the beloved lips and stroked the beautiful hair, crying, "My God, my God! was it not possible for this cup of sorrow to have passed?"

Old Simon, standing at the foot of the bed, his white head bowed low, his body shaken as by some mighty inward upheaval, said: "Good-bye, l'il Missus; we hates to gib you up, but we'll all be wid you on de resurrection mawnin'."

CHAPTER TWO

CHRISTMAS IN BUCKS POCKET

YES, there is a Bucks Pocket, and it is inhabited by real people. Not the sort of people that dwell in towns and other centers of population, where there are railroads, schools, and libraries.

To these our brethren of Bucks Pocket would seem a queer people, and their world a fit dwelling place for Rip Van Winkle, so asleep, so benighted, so isolated were they.

True, they had red blood, the purest Anglo-Saxon blood to be found in America. They also had big, human hearts, and dimly they had a belief that they possessed souls, but of their souls they were almost as unconscious as their brethren and sisters who dwell in the roaring towns and industrial centers.

Few of them could read or write, and many of them had never gone a day's journey from the place of their birth. They were not only ignorant, but narrow, suspicious, and superstitious. Of strangers they were afraid; for new ideas or innovations they had no use.

When once you gained their confidence, they trusted you as implicitly as little children.

Their idea of Christmas was crude, almost barbarous, and it is no wonder that in this pocket in the mountains, the celebration of our Savior's nativity should have been quite different from the one taking place at the same time, the same night, in the home of the Wares, in the heart of the Cumberlands, several hundred miles away.

Cliff Anderson was the ruling spirit of Bucks Pocket. He was called by every one "Cap" Anderson, but few could tell you the reason for this. If he had been questioned closely, he might, reluctantly, have told his inquisitor that he had been offered a captain's commission in the Confederate army for gallant and distinguished services, but declined because he could neither read nor write, but his devoted comrades in arms dubbed him "Captain," and ever afterward persisted in addressing him by that appellation.

On the other hand, if he had not "taken a shine" to his questioner, he would probably have replied gruffly: "It's none of your durned business."

He was a large man, two or three inches above six feet, with broad shoulders, a massive head, surmounted by a thick growth of iron-gray hair, a grizzly mustache and imperial, steel-gray eyes, cold, cruel, unflinching in the presence of an enemy, but capable of softness and sympathy when confronted by a woman in distress or a child in tears.

He was known far and wide as the "King of the Wild Catters," and his corn whisky was noted for its purity wherever the name of "Cap" Anderson was spoken. The revenue officers occasionally made raids in Bucks Pocket, and sometimes captured a crude still, but they never could find an owner. It was a common belief that these crude outfits were "planted" from time to time by the "revenoos" so that they could make a show of raiding Bucks Pocket and destroying "wild cat" operations.

Be that as it may, it is certain that they never found "Cap" Anderson's distillery, or came near it, so far as any one knew. It was a thoroughly equipped, modern affair, with a large capacity for a "wild cat" outfit, and

its owner prided himself on making the best liquor to be had anywhere.

When a man was offered a drink out of his friend's bottle and told that it was "Anderson's 'pizen'," he knew that no purer "pizen" was ever distilled, and that it had fewer fights and headaches to the gallon than any other brand.

A fit companion for Cliff Anderson was his wife, Molly. She, too, was a product of the mountains, and, like him, had no "book larnin'." In fact, the only book she had ever seen was a Bible carried by the "Hard Shell" preacher who came once a month to preach in an old tumbledown log house in the "Pocket" called the "church." On his monthly visits he usually stopped at the home of the Anderson's, where he reported the news of the activities of the "revenoos" in the outside world, and for his kindness he would carry away in one side of his saddlebags several bottles of Anderson's "mountain dew," while his Bible rested securely on the other side.

If there were any other books in the world, Molly Anderson had never heard of them, but she did know that there were almanacs, for Cliff got one every Spring so that she could tell when the moon was right for planting her garden, and it was one of the duties of the "hard shell" preacher, on his monthly visits, to look up the proper time of the moon for planting, also for hog killing, making boards, laying the worm of rail fences, and many other things that would be a failure if not done "in the moon."

Molly was rather small, with a kindly face, but firm jaw, dark red hair, deep brown eyes, and her step was firm and vigorous. She was the only person in Bucks Pocket who dared approach Cliff Anderson when he was in a towering rage, which, to his credit

be it said, did not occur often, and then not without sufficient provocation.

Completing the Anderson family, the youngest but by no means the least interesting, was Ruth Anderson, the eighteen-year-old daughter. She was the acknowledged belle of Bucks Pocket. In fact, she held sway as queen over a much wider territory.

Young gentlemen with an eye to perfect beauty and matrimonially inclined, came from the neighboring county-seat towns to offer themselves upon the altar of matrimony, but their generous sacrifices were magnanimously declined.

The most persistent suitor was Bud Whitman, a native son of Bucks Pocket. He had grown up with Ruth Anderson and had always intended to appropriate her when he was "good and ready."

Ruth resembled neither her father nor mother. Her olive complexion, her brown eyes and raven black hair, her arched eyebrows, her finely chiseled face and perfect figure did not seem to be indigenous to Bucks Pocket. As she grew to womanhood she felt a longing for something so lacking in her own life, and yet she could not give a name to it.

There were no schools in Bucks Pocket, and while her father could have sent her away to school, he sturdily refused to do so. He and his wife had engaged in many stormy scenes about it, Mrs. Anderson insisting that Ruth should have "book larnin'," whatever that might mean; but Cliff Anderson was adamant on this point. He never allowed Ruth to go away from home unless she was accompanied by him or her mother, and always demanded that she return by night fall.

His devotion to her was remarkable, and she had never known an unkind word from him, but she always stood in awe of the great, grizzled old warrior, for she

knew that beneath all his kindness to her there lurked a sleeping lion, perhaps a devil. Whatever the motives of the father may have been for wanting to keep his daughter ignorant of "book larnin'," he kept to himself, and unless he sees fit to tell some one who shall disclose it we may never know.

At any rate, this was the "status" of the Anderson family on the Christmas eve in question when all the lads and lassies of Bucks Pocket assembled at the home of "Cap" Anderson for a Christmas celebration. Some few came by special invitation from the outside world, but the pickets at the entrance to the Pocket made sure that no suspicious "revenoo" spy passed into the Pocket on this, the greatest night of the year.

Ah, yes, about this Bucks Pocket. It is a strange, wild freak of nature on the west side of Sand Mountain in North Alabama. The earth seems to have dropped down several hundred feet, leaving sheer rock walls on three sides hundreds of feet high. At the bottom of the Pocket there are thousands of acres of fertile land, heavily timbered with giant white oak, hickory, poplar, and pine trees. Sauty Creek flows along on the top of Sand Mountain, which is a rolling plateau about twenty miles wide, until it reaches Bucks Pocket, where it abruptly plunges over the cliff and dashes, a Niagara in miniature, into the pocket, or valley, hundreds of feet below. It then rushes furiously through the Pocket, dashing in dangerous rapids until it reaches the Tennessee river, where it is lost in the muddy waters of this historic stream.

On the three walled sides there is but one entrance through a narrow, rocky defile, which has been made into a road so that a team of oxen can draw a wagon filled with barrels containing Anderson's "best."

The corn from which "Cap" Anderson distils his famous whisky is brought in from the Tennessee River

Valley, entered from the open side of the Pocket. At strategic points on this open side there are cabins where henchmen of Anderson live, who run the blockade for him and keep him informed by "grapevine" telegraph if any suspicious characters are seen lurking in the neighborhood who require attention.

When the guests were assembled and the master of ceremonies, who was none other than our friend Bud Whitman, announced that it was time to "cut 'em loose," it was perfectly safe to assume that there were no "strangers within the gates," but that each one present could qualify for a place in the fold.

How they did "cut 'em loose" on this particular Christmas eve has not yet been forgotten in Bucks Pocket. Most of the men had imbibed freely of "Cap" Anderson's honest corn juice, and it brought out in each his hidden proclivities. The women, also, were not averse to an occasional sip, as it was eminently respectable to manufacture the joy producer, provided you were not haled into Uncle Sam's court, and also to drink it whenever and wherever you desired.

Almost every one in Bucks Pocket drank, the notable exceptions being Cliff Anderson, his wife, and daughter. However, they did not discourage drinking in others, for it was a source of revenue to the Anderson household, and Anderson's philosophy was that if you had it in your system you had better drive it out with pure liquor than in some other way.

Bucks Pocket had some noted fiddlers of the backwoods variety, and a few slugs of the pure juice of the corn added a wonderful skill to their manipulations of the bow. How the fiddles did talk! You could see the principals engaged in conversation when they struck up the "Arkansas Traveler," and visions of a burning forest filled the fancy when they began to scream forth: "Fire in the Mountains," and brogan

shoes clattered on the puncheon floor as hearts beat warm and passionate against brown jeans and home-made linsey.

Someone had hung a bunch of mistletoe on one side of the great room, and when some big husky swain felt the warm breath and gripping hand pressure of his partner, and saw in the sparkling eyes a banter, as if she were saying: "I dare you to do it," he would swing her quite unresisting beneath the mistletoe, and then exact the penalty by planting on her red lips or rosy cheeks a resounding kiss, as the others gave their approval by shouts and loud clapping of their hands.

Bud Whitman "called the figures," as they danced the old Virginia reel and other old-fashioned dances, the only dances in which they were skilled. He was a past-master at the art, and in all his glory when engaged in the performance of this proud function. He had a voice like a fog-horn, and the more he "called," and the more he drank, the more sonorous his voice grew, and the more animated his actions. His whole body was in rhythm with the music. He swayed from side to side, patting with his two big hands and also with his foot, all in perfect time, as he called "Honah yo' pardners," "All promenade," and so on through the "set."

A half barrel filled with some of Anderson's two-year-old "corn" sat in the corner of the room, the head knocked out, so that when a dancer wanted to appease his thirst, he simply took one of the tin half-pint cups hung on a row of nails driven into the barrel and helped himself. No water was permissible to be drunk either with the whiskey to dilute it, or afterward as a "chaser." It would have been a sign of weakness which even the ladies scorned to exhibit.

"Take 'er straight, boys an' gals; take 'er straight,"

Bud would shout, and no one would have thought of disobeying.

Bud had bought a pair of high-heeled, red-topped boots for the occasion, and was rigged out in his best homespun, with a store-bought red bandana handkerchief around his neck. He was very proud of his appearance, for he wanted to suitably impress Ruth Anderson with his good looks as well as his importance, for he had about made up his mind to inform her that he was going to marry her before very long, not doubting that she would be only too eager to accept.

Ruth's heart never seemed to be in these wild dances, nor did she enjoy the ribald jests of the half drunken guests; perhaps it was because she had not imbibed the "overjoyful" in the barrel in the corner of the room, or maybe it was an innate feeling of refinement not possessed by the others.

As the hours went by and the revellers became more boisterous, a feeling of loathing for her surroundings and associates took possession of her, and she would have fled from the room, but she knew that her father would be offended, for he was punctilious upon the point that his guests should always be accorded every courtesy. He and his wife frequently looked in on the young people, and smiled their approval.

Bud was now feeling that the world was his, and he seized Ruth and said:

"You are my pardner fur the next set," and she yielded because she did not want to anger him. Madly he whirled her round and round, as the fiddles fairly shrieked, and the other dancers stopped as the pair drew nearer and nearer to the overhanging mistletoe. At first Ruth did not discern his purpose, but suddenly it dawned on her that Bud intended to get her under

the mistletoe and kiss her. A feeling of anger, indignation and loathing swept over her, and she tried to break away from him, but he held her as easily as a big grizzly bear could have done. Realizing her helplessness in his embrace, she said: "Please don't; I'll hate you always if you do!" His answer was a big, coarse guffaw that caused the hot blood to mantle her cheeks and her eyes to blaze. The next moment he swung her under the mistletoe and began to rain hot, drunken, passionate kisses on her lips, holding her as in a vice, while everyone shouted and urged him on. With the energy of despair, Ruth, with her free hand, began to scratch his face like some wild animal, the blood flowing from the wounds, and then by one mighty effort she wrenched herself free and, as he came toward her to seize her again, she dealt him one terrific blow with all her might on his nose, and the blood gushed from his nostrils in two healthy streams.

No wounded bull in the arena ever bellowed more hoarsely or struck out more blindly than did the half-drunken, humiliated Bud, now a potential beast himself. He was the bully of Bucks Pocket. Almost every young fellow present had suffered some indignity at his hand, and when Ruth dealt him the blow that brought the blood, as some unsympathetic bystander said, "like a stuck hog," it is little wonder that every one rejoiced at his humiliation.

Blinded with rage, the blood filling his mouth and eyes, forgetting that his antagonist was a woman, and the woman that he had determined to make his wife, he struck her a cruel blow and she reeled and would have fallen to the floor, if she had not recovered by throwing out her hands and striking the wall of the house.

Cliff Anderson had come to the doorway just in time

to see the drunken bully strike Ruth, and with one bound he crossed the room, dealt him a terrible blow, as he said between his clenched teeth: "By God, I'll kill you!"

Whitman fell to the floor like a log, but only for a moment. Rising to his knees he pulled a revolver from his hip pocket and was in the act of firing when someone knocked it from his hand, and a dozen strong men seized and overpowered him. As they dragged him from the room he filled the atmosphere with his curses and threats. "I'll git even with you; I'll kill you, if it takes me ten years!" he shouted hoarsely, as his voice died away in the distance.

The dance was over, and it had come near being a "dance of death."

Christmas day a few choice spirits gathered at Anderson's distillery and discussed the events of the previous night. They warned Anderson to be careful, as Bud Whitman was a bad man, and would never rest until he had made his threat good. As they discussed the incident and drank to the health of the King of the Wild Catters, the firing of big guns could be heard coming from various parts of the Pocket. To a newcomer it would have meant the approach of an army of "revenoos," or a battle between contending feudists; but to the old timer it meant the celebration of Christmas.

In this out of the way spot, in this year of grace, where there were no schools, no churches, the dwellers hailed the day that brought "peace on earth, good will to men" by the firing of murderous guns and the drinking of contraband whiskey.

Do not condemn them, for they are the product of conditions over which they have had little or no control, and when their Moses comes, as come he must to

every soul, who knows but what Bucks Pocket may become a beacon light to the more highly developed communities.

Who knows, or who can tell what mysterious spiritual forces were at work to bring these benighted people into a life of great and wonderful fullness.

Then judge them not, those of you whose "lives have been cast in pleasant places," for you cannot put yourself in their places, and therefore you are not prepared to judge. Perhaps when this story is told and "finis" has been written, you will feel that you have played a poor second to the dwellers in Bucks Pocket.

CHAPTER THREE

EARTH TO EARTH

QUIETLY Simon stepped out of the presence of death. The weakness, helplessness, and despair of the other members of the Ware family was his strength. All the days of his life he had never thought of himself, but he lived, thought, and planned for others. Simon had crucified self so long ago that he rarely remembered him. Now, as always, he forgot his own grief in his deeper grief for Wilbur Ware, Peggy, Ralph, and Virginia. Gladly would he have borne all their griefs, if he could. Joyfully would he have lain down his own life, if he could have brought "Young Missus" back and have restored her to health and the bosom of her family.

He went to the nearest neighbor and told the tragic news, and in a little while it spread throughout the settlement, and the neighbors gathered in as they do in the rural communities in the South, and the women mingled their tears with those of the heart-broken children, while the men, ashamed to show such womanly weakness, walked away from the scene of grief, and gazed toward the snow-clad peaks in the distance.

One motherly soul carried Ralph and Virginia to her home, but Peggy refused to leave the presence of her mother for a moment.

Some of the men tried to address Wilbur Ware, but his speech and manner repelled all advances. He even spoke harshly to Peggy as she placed her arms about

him in her grief, craving his sympathy and tenderness. He would give no instruction about the funeral, except to say with what sounded like an oath that "no preacher should officiate at the grave." This was in answer to a suggestion from one of the men that he would go to the nearest town, some twenty miles away, and get a minister.

To Peggy's pleading he was obdurate, and even brutal, and sensing a great mental reaction in her father, she became alarmed for his reason. Indeed it seemed to everyone that in his eyes there was the look of the madman.

Simon went with some of the neighbors and selected a spot in the graveyard adjoining the church where Wilbur Ware had been the shepherd of the sheep for five years. It was on a little knoll, and they shoveled away the snow before they could begin to dig the frozen earth.

While the grave was being dug, others made a coffin from wide pine boards that some one in the community always had on hand for the visits of the grim reaper. Someone suggested that so fine a lady as Mrs. Ware deserved something more than a plain box, and after much consultation it was decided that one of the women who had a black satin dress that belonged to her mother back in old "Virginny," before the war, should cut it up and use it to cover the coffin, a mark of unusual respect to the beloved wife of their pastor.

All that day and through the long night, Wilbur Ware sat gazing into vacancy, never uttering a word, while the others "sitting up with the corpse" talked in whispers.

Simon was everywhere, answering questions, giving directions, occasionally consulting with Peggy, and anon bringing in hickory logs and replenishing the

fire in the great wide-mouthed fireplace. At stated intervals he would pass around cups of coffee from the steaming hot coffee pot to help the watchers to "keep awake."

The interminable night came to an end at last, and as the first streaks of dawn fell athwart the winter landscape, some of the neighbor women came to relieve the watchers, who went home to snatch a little sleep before the funeral, while breakfast was prepared in an adjoining room by some of the kindly souls.

As for Simon, he said: "I'll jest snatch a few bites as I go ovah to de church, an' see ef de grabe am ready."

The snowstorm had increased with the night, and the snow lay thick upon the ground, and every tree and bush wore a heavy mantle.

The time for the funeral arrived, and the pall bearers carried the coffin containing the mortal remains of Mrs. Ware and placed it in a wagon drawn by a team of mules. There were not many mule teams in the community, but as a mark of distinguished respect, Gabe Houston had come ten miles with his spanking team so that the remains would not have to be drawn by a yoke of oxen. He drove proudly at the head of the procession, which was followed by ox wagons and persons on foot, and thus they marched to the graveyard a mile away, Wilbur Ware refusing to ride, but walking in stony silence behind the wagon which was bearing to its last resting place the one human being that had helped him to keep his hold on God; and now that hold was broken, and faith was dead, and hope buried.

By the time they reached the open grave the snow was falling in blinding sheets, filling the men's eyes so that they could scarcely find their way as they bore

the coffin from the wagon to the grave. Without a word they lowered it to where it was to remain as the countless ages roll by, and with bared heads stood back, looking helplessly toward each other, and then toward their pastor, whom they now regarded almost in horror.

Was no word to be spoken, no prayer to be offered? There was no answer to their mute appeal save the sobbing of Peggy and the women and of the pathetic calls of Ralph and Virginia for "Mother." Finally the suspense became unbearable, and Wilbur Ware, in a harsh, unnatural voice, said: "Fill up the grave." Unable to restrain herself longer, Peggy, looking around with untold agony in her face, said:

"Won't someone please say a word or offer a prayer?"

No one budged. These hardy mountaineers could brave all kinds of weather, undergo untold hardships, even fight an enemy to the death, but not one of them could face this ordeal. Two or three of the women nudged their husbands, urging them in whispers, but to no avail. Again Wilbur Ware said: "Fill up the grave," and the men gathered up their shovels to begin, but Peggy stretched out her hands toward Simon, who stood with bowed head, the wind playing with his white locks, and brokenly, pleadingly, said: "Simon!" Not another word came from her lips, and all waited breathless. Then solemnly, reverently, with the halo of a saint about his white head, as some of these present used to declare long after he had gone to his reward, Simon said:

"White folks, you won't mind ef an ig'nant old nigger says a few words at de grabe ob his 'young missus,' will you?"

"You knowse, I toted her in my ahms when she wus a tiny li'l baby, and den I learn her how to walk, an'

I nevah seed de day when I wouldn't lay down my life fer her.

"Befo' de wah I belonged to her fathah, Captain Lee, an' he an' ole Missus was des as good to me as dey wus to da own chile. Dey all teached me to lub God, an' dat God lubed me. An' I goin' to say heah dat I feel His love mo' pow'ful as I stan' by her grabe dan I evah did befo'. I don't know nothin' erbout 'ologies,' but I know dat God am heah and dat 'young missus' ain't lyin' in dat col' frozen groun', but dat she is in de sunburst ob glory wid Jesus. De house she libed in is lyin' dar, but her soul is free, an' she is eberywhah. She is wid God an' Jesus, an' she is heah wid us, too, and she gwine back home wid Massa Ware an' de blessed chilluns, an' she gwine to be a light to guide dar feet into de mos' wonderful ways. An' somehow, somehow," here his voice broke, and it seemed that he could never go on, and the great tears testified to his emotion, "some day she gwine to lead him," pointing to the broken, helpless preacher, "back to God, cause it gwine to be an unbroken fambly when dey all git over yondah, and Simon gwine to be dar, too."

The old wrinkled, black face was lighted by some spiritual fire from within, and all felt that they stood in the presence of a great soul, although housed in a black body, and as the old negro finished, all bowed their heads in silent prayer to God, who did not seem far off in His heavens, but here in their midst.

Silently they filled the grave, placed a plank slab at the head and another at the foot, and still without speaking a word, the procession took up the return march.

Within a week after the burial of the wife and mother, Wilbur Ware had disposed of his earthly pos-

sessions, bought a wagon and yoke of oxen, and announced that he had given up the ministry forever, and was going to the mountains of North Alabama, where he could homestead a hundred and sixty acres of land, on which he proposed to settle and build a home.

Peggy was too stunned by the death of her mother and the condition of her father to ask any questions or make any objection. Ralph and Virginia were enthusiastic over the thought of traveling through the country in a covered wagon. Eagerly they discussed the possibility of passing through cities, seeing railroads and trains, and boys and girls dressed in "store clothes."

As for Simon, he was ready to follow wherever the Wares went, and his only thought was for their comfort and welfare.

Into the wagon Wilbur Ware and Simon loaded such of the household goods as would be absolutely needed, the furniture having been sold to the neighbors.

Peggy put all her books into the wagon without a protest from her father, and looking ruefully at the long shelves of theological works, she said: "Father, what are you going to do with all your books?" She knew that it would require a big wagon and stout yoke of oxen to haul the books that had cost her father a small fortune for a man of his means. Without answering her he began to carry the heavy volumes out into the yard where a big log heap had been built so that the large crowd of neighbors that had assembled to tell the Wares goodbye could keep warm, and piled them on the burning logs. Armful after armful he threw on the burning heap, the flames leaping higher at the addition of each load.

The people watched, amazed, fascinated, wondering what evil spirit could have taken possession of their

former pastor from whom they were about to part, perhaps forever.

In his face there was the look of the grim executioner, and Peggy fled from the tragic scene, unable to witness what seemed to her her father's own funeral pyre, for she would not have been greatly surprised if he had thrown himself on the burning mass and perished with his beloved theological books.

Simon, however, took a different view of the matter, and with a very solemn face, but a merry twinkle in his eyes, proposed to aid the minister in his work. No one else interfered, for they all thought the preacher insane, and one by one they began to withdraw to a safe distance. Simon muttered to himself: "He is burnin' up his God."

At last the work was completed, and all the books were on the burning heap, all except Wilbur Ware's well-worn Bible and the one that belonged to his wife, and which was presented to her by her mother on her wedding day. These he seized and threw on top of the burning volumes. Simon saw what he had done, and the spirit of the crusader took the place of the spirit of the servant. Disregarding the fierce licking of the flames he leaped into their midst, seized the Bibles as their precious leaves were beginning to scorch, and with them held tightly to his breast, he brought them to safety. His hands were terribly burned, his eyebrows and hair singed, his clothing on fire, but he clung to the books that contained for him the words of life, and from which his beloved "missus" had so often read to him.

At this moment Peggy appeared and discovered that his clothing was on fire, and began to put it out, burning her hands. "Don't do dat, honey," said he, "don't

burn yoah little hans, fur it don't make no difference erbout me ef I should burn up."

Seeing what Simon had done, Ware became greatly enraged and tried to snatch the Bibles from him, but for once in his life Simon defied him.

"Ah nevah disobeyed you befo,' Massa Ware, but dis time ah's fightin' fer youah soul's salvation, an' you can burn my body 'long wid you 'ological books, but you can't burn God's word till you burn me!"

It was a tense moment. No one present had ever heard a negro defy a white man without being instantly struck down, and all expected to see the enraged preacher deal Simon a blow that would render the old man helpless. Ware drew back to strike, his face black with passion, but before the blow could descend, Peggy shielded old Simon with her body, and her father's arm fell helplessly to his side. His face twitched convulsively, he reeled as though he were going to fall, then covering his face with his hands, he staggered toward the wagon now loaded and ready to move, picked up the lines, spoke to the oxen, and slowly drove away without a single word of goodbye.

Ralph and Virginia ran after the wagon, Ralph climbing up on the end of the coupling pole from which hung the tar bucket, and from this point of vantage he reached down and grasped Virginia's outstretched hands, drew her up until she stood on the coupling pole, and then he climbed into the wagon and pulled Virginia in after him, and they cuddled down in the bed clothing, peeping out from the opening in the rear of the wagon cover.

Peggy and Simon lingered while everyone crowded around to tell them goodbye.

Although Simon was unwelcome because of his color when he first came among them, and there had been

various and sundry threats of "white-capping" him, this feeling had passed away and he was now held in the highest esteem by every one. Many pressed around him and gave his calloused hand a hearty grasp and wished him Godspeed.

They all loved Peggy. She had been the inspiration for the young people, and a benediction to the older ones. Now that she was going out of their lives forever, they were disconsolate, and many expressed their grief in loud lamentations, while low sobs could be heard even among the men. No funeral could have been so sad. No death in the community had ever brought such darkness as the departure of Peggy. She tried to be brave. She smiled through her tears, and her face was never more beautiful, and in the years to come that sweet image enshrined in the hearts of these simple folk, lighted many a dark valley along Life's journey.

"I'll come back to you; I'll come back," she kept saying as she said goodbye to one after another. "I love you, every one of you, and I feel in my soul that God will bring me back."

At last she tore herself away from the clinging people and followed Simon, who had preceded her up the road in the direction taken by the wagon. It had already disappeared over a distant hill top, and when Peggy reached it she looked back, and the crowd had not dispersed. Everyone stood where she had left them, straining their eyes for a last glimpse of the one who typified to them angelic sweetness, sunshine, and joy. She waved them a last farewell, and disappeared from view, and the crowd silently began to disperse. Once out of their sight she was overcome by her grief, and kneeling at the foot of a great oak tree, she sobbed out her agony until Simon said kindly:

"Come on, little missus, God is guidin' us, an' He will dry youah teahs."

All the remainder of the day the oxen plowed on through the rocky, muddy mountain road, Simon following behind, while Peggy, at his earnest solicitation, had climbed into the wagon.

As the sun was setting, they came to a small stream where Wilbur Ware halted the tired oxen, and unyoked them, indicating that here they would strike camp for the night.

Simon took the axe and cut some dead logs and soon had a roaring fire, around which they all gathered to warm their half-frozen hands and feet.

With the few cooking utensils they had brought, Peggy soon prepared a simple meal of corn pone, bacon and eggs, supplemented by a big pot of steaming coffee. The youngsters, at least, were ravenously hungry, and did full justice to the meal, talking excitedly and enthusiastically about the wonderful country they expected to pass through on the morrow. The others ate sparingly and in silence, Simon waiting until they had finished, and then taking his food and going to his side of the fire, where he ate slowly and thoughtfully.

They had brought along several sacks of "nubbins" to feed the oxen, and their contented crunching testified to their appetites.

The bleak winter wind caused them no discomfort so long as their stomachs were full, for nature had given them a covering that furnished ample protection.

The flames, leaping high from the burning logs, threw weird shadows into the surrounding woods, and Ralph and Virginia enjoyed the novelty of their first camp fire.

Wilbur Ware's demeanor was more normal as the day passed. The light of madness in his eyes had given place to one of hopeless suffering. The foundation on which he had stood for years had been swept away, and now he felt an aching void that nothing could ever fill.

For years it had been his custom to read from the Bible and offer prayer before the children retired, but he felt that he could never do so again. To him prayer would be an empty mockery, a meaningless jargon of words, and he would not further stultify himself by engaging in something in which he did not believe.

So it was that when the bedding had been arranged in the great wagon and Simon had placed his blankets on a pile of boughs which he had heaped near the fire, Wilbur Ware announced that inasmuch as they would begin their journey at daybreak in the morning all had better retire.

Wistfully the children looked at their father and at each other, no one speaking until Virginia said: "Papa, ain't you going to pray? You always prayed when mama was here. She's in heaven now, but I know she wants us to pray, and she will help us, too, 'cause she is with the angels, and is right close to God, and he can hear her when she asks him to answer our prayers."

This simple faith of "baby" Virginia reacted on Wilbur Ware as nothing else had done. It shook him to the very foundation of his being. He might have argued angrily with Simon, or firmly with Peggy; even Ralph he could have dismissed with some lame excuse. But here was his youngest, his baby, looking at him through those great wide-open eyes, piercing his gloomy soul, speaking the language of faith, of perfect trust in God in whom he no longer believed, and

he found it impossible to utter a word. With her he could not argue or reason. His doubts meant nothing to her, for she was still at that age when faith is sublime, when life is all beauty, and everything in the universe is good. No truer saying did Christ ever utter than that we must become as little children before we can enter the Kingdom of heaven.

Unable to answer her, stunned as if by an unexpected blow, the ex-preacher arose from his place by the fire and stole quietly to the wagon, where he slept little, being haunted by the storm clouds of doubt and unbelief that swept over his soul.

Turning to Peggy, Virginia, seeming to realize fully for the first time the terrible change in her father, said: "Sister, what ails father? Is he afraid of God?"

"Father is not well, Virginia, but he will soon be himself again," said Peggy.

"Well, then," persisted Virginia, "if he is too sick to pray how could he walk all day in the mud and drive the oxen?"

This was too much of a puzzle for Peggy to answer, and she made no reply.

Once more the child's voice pleaded: "If papa is too sick to pray to God, then I think we ought to pray for him to get well."

Overcome by the lisping of Virginia, Peggy burst into tears which she hastily brushed away, saying: "Yes, Virginia, we will pray for our papa, and for ourselves, too, for we need God also."

Then she called Simon to come over and sit with them near the fire, and in her wonderfully musical voice she repeated the twenty-third psalm, which she had memorized when she was no older than Ralph. Simon had heard it read often, but it never held out such beautiful promises before. Ralph and Virginia

felt that some great shepherd of the forest sent by God was standing near by to protect them from all harm. Softly, pleadingly, but confidently, the words that have soothed millions fell from her lips:

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. . . . Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

The psalm ended and Peggy knelt, lifting her face to the wintry skies where gleamed a million stars, and the others followed her example. "Our Heavenly Father," the young voice quavered, "we are just thy children lost in the forest, and we need the good shepherd to guide us. Our dear father is sick because he has lost his way since mother left us. His sickness blinds him so he cannot see your face. Oh, won't you take him by the hand and lead him, and all of us in thy way? Amen."

Peace, peace, unspeakable, filled the hearts of these simple worshippers, while the fires of doubt and unbelief raged in the soul of Wilbur Ware. No material hell with its fiery, brimstone billows, its burning, quenchless thirst, could ever equal in suffering the anguish of the storm-tossed soul that has lost its faith in God. No Stygian darkness was ever one-half so black as the murky pall that settles over the man who says "there is no God, no soul, no spiritual life."

And for the man who has once climbed to some lofty peak of life and viewed the promised land from afar, and turned back to wallowing in the mire of material things, thinking that the flesh pots can satisfy, there is no pictured hell of Dante's *Inferno* that can ever hold for him the suffering to which he is doomed by his own act of closing his eyes to the celestial vision.

That night Peggy had a marvelous dream, and in

the years that followed, it was always present with her. She dreamed that at the end of their journey, they came to a place in the mountain where a stream of water leaped over a precipice into a narrow, rock-walled valley below, and that there was a rough, winding road descending into this valley from which she could see the smoke ascending from the cabins. When her father would have passed on, she saw her mother beckoning to her father to follow the winding road into the valley, but he did not see her.

Peggy cried to her father to look, but he was so blinded for some reason he could not see, and was driving in another direction. Then her mother showed great agitation, earnestly pointing in the direction of the valley lying far below. Peggy, greatly distressed because of her father's blindness, insisted so earnestly that he turned the oxen's head and entered the mysterious valley.

It was a new world to Peggy. She had lived among mountain people, but not like these. Nowhere did she see a school or church, but there were drunken men and wild revelry. Many of the women were haggard, and forlorn, while the younger people were barefooted and poorly clad.

"Hither have I guided you," her mother told her, "to do a great work. It is so far-reaching I will not reveal it all to you at this time. You might doubt this vision because of its magnitude. From time to time as the work grows, and your vision expands, I will guide you. Some day the echo of your efforts here in this out-of-the-way, benighted, place will be heard around the world. Here your father will find his salvation, and his work, and peace to his soul."

Peggy awoke in the morning with a great resolve in her heart. She felt that her dream was something

more than a dream—that it was a vision, and it became to her a great white light to guide her footsteps.

As day after day passed, and they traveled through the mountains to their journey's end, her vision gave her a strength and courage she had never known before.

Late one afternoon she looked to the West, and behold the place of her dream! She inquired of a passing traveler, and he said dubiously:

"That is Bucks Pocket, where they make wild cat whiskey and kill 'revenoo' officers. You don't want to go in there, for if you do, you may never get out alive."

He went on his way, and the wagon rumbled on until they came to the winding road of her dream. Her father took another road, and Peggy pleaded with him to take the one leading into the mysterious valley. He protested, but she was so earnest, assuring him that she felt in her soul that it was what they ought to do, that he consented, having no particular objection himself. Just as the sun was hiding behind the tall trees fringing the far side of the valley, they entered Bucks Pocket.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE UNWELCOME STRANGERS

IT was a rocky road that led into Bucks Pocket, and the approach of a wagon as the wheels bounded from boulder to boulder, could be heard for a mile or more. Even a man on horseback could not travel that road without being betrayed by the sound of his horse's hoofs on the rocks.

The Wares had not traveled far until a man, coming from nowhere apparently, stood in front of the wagon blocking further passage, and threw up his hand, giving the signal to stop.

"Do you all recon' as you know whar you gwine?" he asked in a high-pitched, drawling voice.

He was tall, lank, dressed in homespun, wore a coon-skin cap, and carried a long squirrel rifle. His hair was long and shaggy, while a heavy beard completely covered his face, leaving nothing visible except his eyes, and they were sharp as a ferret's.

Taken by surprise, Wilbur Ware made no answer.

Again the stranger drawled: "I calc'late you all on the wrong road and you'll have to travel about a mile afore you kin find a place big enough to turn 'round in."

Ware, by this time, found his voice, and said:

"No, we haven't taken the wrong road, and will be much obliged if you will direct us to a camping place."

The stranger chuckled. "They ain't no campin'

place in Bucks Pocket fur strangers, but I'll show you whare to turn round."

"But we are not going to turn round, my good man, we have come to locate and live among you."

This time the coonskin-capped man laughed. "We are opposed to furrin immigration," he said, "an' the sooner you git out, the better it will be fur all parties consarned. Foller me an' I'll show you whare to turn round." Without waiting for a reply he strode ahead, and there was nothing to do but follow.

It seemed an interminable way, but the stranger finally stopped, and it was now so dark that the occupants of the wagon could not see him.

"Here is whare you turn back," he said.

"It is so dark I cannot see to turn round, even if I desired to," declared Ware, "and we will spend the night here."

"You won't without a fight, pardner. I've been pow'ful gentle with you, but I'll git rough ef you make me."

The children were frightened, and Virginia began to cry. This instantly caught the attention of the bearded man, and he said: "Good Lord, you ain't got yore brats thare in the wagon, has you?"

"Yes," replied Ware, "I have my three children with me."

"Well, I recon' that brings on more talk than I have language to express. So, I'll jest take you to the Captain, and let him try yore case." Saying which he produced a lantern, lighted it, and said in a gentler voice:

"Foller me, pardner, and I'll take you to the real boss of Bucks Pocket."

The road grew smoother and the ground more level as they proceeded, while the trees on both sides of the

road seemed to almost touch the sky. Finally they reached a clearing and could see lights twinkling. Soon they drew up in front of a huge, two-story, double log house, with great stone chimneys at each end.

The man guiding the Wares entered the house, and shortly returned, followed by a large, soldierly built man and a rather small, nervous woman, evidently his wife.

"Hello, stranger!" spoke the man in a short, commanding tone. "Who are you and what do you want?"

Again Virginia began crying, perhaps thinking that her tears might soften the hearts of these queer people.

"Bless my heart," said the woman, "I hear a baby. What on earth do you mean, stranger, comin' to Bucks Pocket with yore kid. You must a stole it some'ers and come here to hide it. Ef you did, we don't want no child stealers here. I would hate one worser than I do the "revenoo" officers, and I guess I hate 'em worse 'an I do the devil," said Molly Anderson.

"No, madam," answered Ware, "she is my child. I never stole a child in my life, but sixteen years ago some cruel monster stole my first born and I have never seen or heard from her since."

"Pore man, I am sorry fer youh, and ef I could find the scoundrel what stole yore chile, I'd pizen him same as I would a rattlesnake," replied Mrs. Anderson.

No one observed her husband as he turned a deathly white and clutched at the wagon wheel to steady himself. His voice was husky as he spoke, and he was visibly agitated.

"Molly, I guess we bettah take these kids in the house tonight, and the old man and the 'coon'," referring to Simon, "can camp out, and in the mornin' I'll 'scort them out of Bucks Pocket."

Molly Anderson's big heart responded instantly, and Peggy, Ralph, and Virginia were soon inside the house by a roaring fire, while Ware and Simon were shown a place where they could leave their wagon and feed the oxen.

Ruth Anderson came in from another part of the house. She stood looking at them, shyly, quizzically, until her mother said:

"Ruth, these is some strangers what lost their way, an' we are gwine to keep them 'til mornin'."

Then Ruth turned to Peggy and said: "What is your name?" To which Peggy responded:

"My name is Peggy Ware, and I am so glad to know you, and am so happy to be here."

"Well, my name is Ruth Anderson, and I like you better than any girl I ever saw."

Impulsively Peggy threw her arms about the beautiful mountain girl and kissed her warmly. This act so touched Ruth that she said:

"I'm pow'ful sorry for you, and I'm goin' to ax my pap ef you can't stay with us all the time. Would you like to?"

"I think it would be a wonderful home, and you have such a lovely mother and fine father, that I am sure I could be very, very happy here," said Peggy.

Cliff Anderson had entered the house unobserved, and as he listened to the sincere words of Peggy, the hard look in his face relaxed and he said:

"Little gal, it's been many a long day sense any one called me a "fine man," an' ef you knowed more about me I am afeard you would change your mind."

"I could never change my opinion, Mr. Anderson," said Peggy, "for I can look in your eyes and see that you are as true as steel."

His eyes shifted before Peggy's soul-searching gaze. His eyes, that had looked death in the face many times, quailed before a slender girl. Happily for his comfort, his wife announced that supper was ready, and as she bustled the Wares into the kitchen, where the meals were both cooked and eaten, she ordered her husband to go for the children's father, who, she said, "must be almost froze and starved too by this time." "Bring the nigger in too and let him set by the fire and warm hisself while the white folks eat."

Without a word the big king of the Wild Catters obeyed his wife, and they were all soon seated at the long table, with all the food heaped on big dishes in the center.

"You maybe ain't used to country grub, but it's the best we kin do fer ye," apologized Mrs. Anderson. "I got nuthin' but cold hog's head and kraut, some back-bone and spare ribs, some cracklin' bread and sweet taters and some punkin pie. I made a little coffee, thinkin' it would warm ye all up a bit. An' I have some sweet and butter milk, and some of the best butter you ever tasted. And I have some biscuits bakin', and they will be red hot by the time you finish your corn pone."

Ralph had been following with his eyes the various articles of food as they were named over, and by the time the conversation was finished, they were bulging with delight, for he was very much in love with his stomach. Rubbing this portion of his anatomy in a most caressing manner, he said:

"If you will excuse me for buttin' in, I'll say that this is the grandest meal I ever sat down to." This brought forth a hearty laugh, and an agreement by every one that they would never die of starvation, if they could always have Mrs. Anderson for a cook.

After the white folks had finished, Simon was invited to the table, but he declined, saying that he preferred to eat by the kitchen fire, where he could keep warm. So a generous supply of everything on the table was placed on the "hath," this being the Bucks Pocket's word for hearth, and the old darkey enjoyed his supper, for, as he remarked, it reminded him of the "good ole days in Virginny befo' de wah."

Ruth, who had never seen a negro before, was much interested in Simon, and peeped in at the kitchen door more than once to watch him as he ate. She told Peggy that there never was but one "nigger" in Bucks Pocket, and that the Ku-Klux hung him and threw his body in the Tennessee River, at least this was the story that had been handed down; for certain it was that he had disappeared, and days afterward the body of a negro man was found floating in the river near Decatur.

After supper, Anderson suggested that he and the stranger guest retire to another room, saying: "I recon' we might as well talk 'turkey' tonight as any time."

With their bodies warm and their appetites satisfied, Ralph and Virginia soon began to nod, and Peggy suggested that she would go with them to the wagon and put them to bed. To this suggestion Mrs. Anderson stoutly protested.

"Sakes alive, no," she said; "you'll do nothing of the sort. I'll pull out the trundle bed that Ruth slept on until she was purty nigh grown," saying which, she went to the further end of the big room, where a high, old-fashioned bed stood, with a snow white counterpane for covering, and drew from under it a trundle bed.

"Me and Cliff sleeps here, and the kids will be safe here on the trundle bed, I recon," and she cast a

reassuring look to the arsenal of guns in the rack on the wall.

Ralph and Virginia were evidently not afraid, for they soon were sound asleep, tired but happy that they had reached a haven of warmth and plenty of food.

Left to themselves, Mrs. Anderson, Ruth, and Peggy found many things of mutual interest to talk about.

"I guess you got a lot of book larnin', ain't you?" inquired Ruth of Peggy.

Laughingly, Peggy said: "Well, yes; I have studied many books, but I feel that I have very little learning, and am only a beginner. There are many things that you don't need books to teach you, and I sometimes think that the greatest things to be learned are not taught in books at all. I think you and your mother, for instance, have learned many things that people who dwell in cities and study many books never know anything about. I am beginning to feel that many of the things we learn in books really becloud and clog our minds so that the great truths of life are obscured from our vision."

Ruth and her mother hung breathless on Peggy's words, although they did not fully comprehend her meaning. They realized that they were in the presence of an unusual girl, and her words were like some wonderful elixir of life to them.

"I recon you ain't got none of them books with you?" asked Ruth, fearing that the answer would be "no."

To her great joy Peggy said: "Oh, yes, I have a lot of them in the wagon."

Ruth's face lighted with an eagerness that Peggy was destined to see in the years to come in the eager faces of thousands of mountain boys and girls.

"An' will you teach me all your book larnin'?" earnestly pleaded Ruth.

"I will teach you what I know, with all my heart," said Peggy, "if it is God's will that I remain in Bucks Pocket."

"Won't you begin tonight? I want to see your books and larn jest a little mite before I go to bed."

"Wait tel mornin'," said her mother. "The young lady is tired, and besides you don't know how yore pap will take it. You know he never wanted you to have no book larnin', and I am afeared that he won't stan' fer it. You know a school taugther come into the Pocket onct, and started a school an' the men all got together and whipped him, then tarred and feathered him, and put him on a raft and started him down the river, and nobody ain't never seed him sence."

"Yes, I know, Ma," answered Ruth. "But they thought he wus a spy fer the 'revenoos,' and I know that they can't think that about—about——" and she hesitated.

"Call me Peggy, and I'll call you Ruth," suggested Peggy graciously, "and then we will feel like we are old friends."

Both girls laughed, and Ruth's mother asked: "May I call you Peggy, too?"

"Certainly," said Peggy, "and I'll call you Ma Anderson. Won't that be fine?"

Again they laughed, and the ice was broken forevermore.

Peggy proposed that they go to the wagon and find some of her school books and bring them to the house. Securing a lantern, the two girls went out into the darkness to hunt for the precious "book larnin'."

In the kitchen Simon nodded by the fire, now burned low, while in another room Anderson and Ware talked long and earnestly, Anderson not without suspicion and grave misgivings, while Ware's conversation was

that of a man laboring under some great mental strain. Afterward Anderson was heard to remark that he acted like a "locoed hoss."

"Coming right down to turkey, pardner," said Anderson, when they were seated by the fire, "what's yore name, whare did you cum frum, what's yore business, an' whare you gwine?"

"Some of your questions are easily answered," replied Ware, "and some of them will have to be answered later."

"All right, pardner, jest as you like, but you will have to answer all of them satisfactionally before you stay in Bucks Pocket, an' then maybe you won't stay," gruffly replied Anderson.

"I'll do the best I can, Mr. Anderson, for I assure you I have nothing to conceal.

"To begin with, my name is Ware, Wilbur Ware, and I come from the Cumberland mountains beyond Knoxville. Originally I came from Virginia from the Shenandoah Valley. My wife died three weeks ago, and her death has almost killed me. It seems to me that the sun has never shone since, and never will again, and I just wanted to get away from the world.

"I heard that there was some vacant government land in this section, and I thought I might homestead a hundred and sixty acres and build a home for my three children and make a living, and find a place where no one knew me, and where I would never meet any one that knew me in the old days."

Ware's evident sincerity and distress touched the big heart of Cliff Anderson, and he began to cast about in his mind for some way to help Ware and his children.

"You know, this is a quare country, Mr. Ware, and I don't know whuther you would ketch on to our ways.

May I ax what were yore ocypation in the "old life," as you call it?"

Ware hesitated. This was the first time this question had been asked since he decided to give up the ministry. He felt ashamed to answer for some reason that he could not have explained. After waiting until the silence had become painful, and Anderson's suspicion had been once more aroused, he said: "I was a minister of the gospel." This was like shaking a red rag at a bull, for Anderson had no use for "sky pilots," as he contemptuously termed all ministers.

"Oh, you wus one o' them shoutin' sky pilots, wus you; snoopin' round to find somethin' to report to the revenoos? And be you still follerin' yore old job.

Again Ware hesitated before the blunt questions of Cliff Anderson. "No, I gave up preaching when my wife died. I'll never open another Bible or preach another sermon as long as I live."

"The hell you won't!" exclaimed Anderson. "You must a reformed. What got the matter with you?"

Should he tell this man the truth? A lie trembled on his lips, but he could not utter it. "Frankly, Mr. Anderson, I came to the conclusion that there is no God, that death ends all, and that all this talk about man's soul, the soul life and spirituality is not in accordance with reason."

"By gosh, I thought you wus queer in the upper story, and I know it now," declared Anderson. "Any man that says they ain't no God, and that when a man dies he ain't no more'n a hoss, is a durned fool. Say, pardner, whare did you git all them wheels in yore gourd?"

"The beginning of my doubts was sixteen years ago, when I was pastor of a church at Chattanooga, Tennessee. It was on a Christmas day that the first great

shock came to me. I had been to church and while I was gone our baby, Florence, two years old, climbed down the steps and into the yard. She toddled out into the street, as we suppose, just before the time for me to return home, and my wife had not missed her until my return. In fact, she was not feeling well, as it was just before our second baby, Peggy, was born, and my wife was lying down resting in an adjoining room to the one where she left our little Florence playing. At any rate, when I came home, she was gone, and we have never been able to get a trace of her since.

“The shock to my wife was terrible, and she never fully recovered. Peggy was born that night, while I was away searching for our lost child. A band of gypsies had been camping near Chattanooga for some weeks, and had broken camp and started east that morning. It is supposed that, seeing Florence in the street, they picked her up and concealed her in one of the numerous covered wagons. Four other children disappeared at the same time, two of them girls just the same age as our child. An armed possé followed the band of gypsies, which had divided. After many days we came up with them and after a fight we recovered all the children except Florence and one other girl of the same age. We could find no trace of them. Returning to where the band divided, we followed the other, but it, too, had divided and scattered into the mountains, and I finally returned home heartbroken, without our child.

“Without continuing the painful story, I will simply add that I roamed for years from place to place, following every possible clew, hoping to find her, but at last I lost hope. And it was then I began to doubt everything. My wife died, still believing that Flor-

ence is alive, and that some day I will find her. I never expect to.

"When my wife died I felt that if there was a God he could not be so cruel as to rob me of both wife and child."

Anderson listened with many contending emotions, that might have been read in his face by a keen observer. Finally he said: "Mr. Ware, you have had lots of trouble, and I am sorry fer you, but I can't see how, ef you ever knowed God, you could ever doubt Him. That's the way I've allus felt about it. I ain't never knowed Him, but sometimes I have wanted to so bad that it hurt me in here," placing his hand on his heart. "Maybe you never honest-to-goodness knowed Him."

Ware did not see fit to attempt to answer this last thrust, and the men sat silent for a long time, gazing into the flickering coals, each busy with his own thoughts. Finally Anderson, in a voice with something of fear in it, said:

"Ef you wus to find yore gal now, how would you know her? Wus they any birth marks on her?"

"None at all," replied Ware. "I have often thought of that, but always felt that somehow or other I would just know. And besides, she resembled her mother and may have grown up to look like her."

"Yes, but you could never be jest as shore as shootin' that it ware her or the other gal, could you?" argued Anderson.

"I suppose that is true, Mr. Anderson, but I am sure I shall never find her and will not have to decide."

Anderson suggested that it must be getting late, and both men rose and walked into the other room. There they were greeted by an unexpected sight. Ralph and Virginia were sleeping soundly in the trun-

dle-bed; while Peggy was teaching Ruth the alphabet. She had learned quite half of her letters, and Peggy had written "Ruth Anderson" at Ruth's request, and she had traced out the letters slowly, painfully almost, trying to imitate Peggy's writing, and she and her mother were overjoyed at the result.

Anderson was dumbfounded, and evidently displeased.

"I don't want my gal to have no book larnin'," he said angrily.

Peggy was half frightened and quite unable to understand this strange obsession against "book larnin'."

"I am sure, Mr. Anderson, that what I teach her will do her no harm," and the earnest eyes of Peggy pleaded with him. He quailed before those soul-searching eyes as he had done once before that evening.

"Oh, pap, I want book larnin' worser than anything in the world, and Peggy is gwine to teach it to me, and you will let her, now won't you, pap?"

As he wavered and hesitated about replying, his wife came to the rescue and said: "Of course, you'll let her larn, Cliff."

For answer he said: "I think you gals had better go to bed, and we will see about it in the mornin'."

"You won't sleep in the wagon tonight, Ware," he said hospitably. "There is a good feather bed in the other room, and you kin sleep there, and Simon kin bring his blankets and sleep on the hath by the kitchen fire. My dad used to say that ef a nigger could sleep with his head to the fire he didn't keer about his feet. So yore nigger kin keep his head warm ef he will keep the fire goin'." And he laughed at his own wit.

While Anderson was disposing of Ware and Simon, Mrs. Anderson had conducted Peggy and Ruth up the stairway to a big room over the one occupied by Ralph

and Virginia, where she turned down the cover, exposing a pair of snow-white sheets on a great feather bed.

After Mrs. Anderson had gone, and the girls were all ready to "jump in" bed, Ruth, talking excitedly every moment, she stopped in the middle of a sentence as she discovered that Peggy was kneeling by the bed, praying silently. She stood abashed for a moment, and then without a word slid down beside Peggy and directly she began to sob, not knowing why. Gently Peggy laid her hand on Ruth's head, and the wild mountain girl, feeling something stir her soul for the first time in her life, whispered:

"Please pray fer me, Peggy. I don't know how."

Cliff Anderson and Molly sat by the fire for a long time. It was past midnight, and all in the house were asleep except these two, and Wilbur Ware, whose occasional sighs, as he tossed restlessly on his bed, told of his perturbed spirit that would not allow him the balm of sleep.

After tip-toeing softly up the stairway and returning, Molly Anderson said:

"Cliff, I wonder ef God ever does anything fer folks like us?" To which he replied, with more feeling than she had ever known him to exhibit:

"I hope so, Molly."

Once more she climbed to the head of the stairway, with a lighted candle in her hand, and this time she whispered: "Come here, Cliff."

Not knowing what his wife wanted, he ascended the stairs, his boots creaking loudly, while she warned him by many "shoos" and whispers to make less noise. Silently she pointed to the sleeping girls, and as the stern old Wild Catter looked long and earnestly at the golden head nestling on the same pillow beside the

one crowned with raven locks, the tears dimmed his eyes and shut out the vision for a moment.

Slowly he descended, followed by his wife, who was perturbed because of his agitation. It was the first time she had ever seen a tear in those steel-blue, fearless eyes, and she was afraid that her husband was not well.

"Be you sick, Cliff," she said anxiously.

"No, Molly, I ain't sick; it's a heap sight worser nor any sickness."

"What on earth can it be, Cliff?" asked Molly, now thoroughly alarmed.

"I don't know myself, Molly. Some day, ef I ever find out, I may tell you." He would say no more, and she had to be contented, for she well knew when her husband was through talking.

"I am gwine to the still, Molly, and won't be back 'til breakfast," he said.

Again she knew that words would be vain, so she said simply:

"Take good keer of yerself, Cliff," and the big form of the King of the Wild Catters was swallowed up in the darkness.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE NEW LIFE BEGINS

WILBUR WARE and Simon were astir early the next morning, for Ware had slept little, and Simon, as was his life-long custom, was up building fires, so that the house might be warm for the white folks.

Ware was pale and haggard. In the long hours of the night he realized that he was like a ship without a rudder, trying to sail an unknown sea without a chart or compass. It seemed to him that his present predicament was the culmination of a life of failure.

He was now past the meridian of life, without earthly possession, with three children depending on him as counsellor, guide, and provider; and he, laboring under some strange hallucination, had come to this dark corner of civilization, without aim or purpose, other than to eke out a miserable animal existence.

He had been uprooted from the past as if by some ruthless force, and he found himself unable to even get a glimpse of the future. He felt ready to throw up his hands and surrender. He had no respect for himself, nor did he expect anyone else to have. He really feared himself, and mentally he contemplated himself as a human derelict, drifting about until some unusual wave should obliterate him forever.

No matter in which direction he looked, all was darkness. No north star gleamed to point the way. Where his God once sat upon a great throne, there

was only chaos. His God was gone, his throne a mass of crumbling ruins, and a great, gaunt skeleton, with lusterless eyes brooded over the scene of desolation, and on his forehead there was the word "Unbelief."

When he looked within, the blackness was even greater, and there sat an imp in the form of the devil of our childhood fancies, and his name was "Despair."

Blindly he wondered if it would not have been better if his theological, materialistic God, loving, hating, rewarding, punishing, jealous at times, and anon angry, just a big super-man, had retained his throne. Then he would have had some sort of anchorage at least, whereas he now had none.

These thoughts surged through his mind as he fed the oxen and wondered where his wanderings would next carry him.

A bountiful breakfast, with home-made sausage, fried chicken, old-fashioned sorghum, and hot butter-milk biscuits was ready when he returned to the house.

He inquired about his host, and was assured by Mrs. Anderson that he had gone for an early morning walk and he would be back for breakfast. A swift glance from Ruth indicated that she knew the cause of her father's absence.

Ralph and Virginia were very much at home, and Mrs. Anderson was already "mothering" them, to their great delight.

Peggy's face was radiant, for her mother had again visited her in a dream, and to her it was real. The vision she saw had been so indelibly written on her soul that it could never be erased.

When the meal was half finished, Anderson entered briskly, apologizing for his tardiness, explaining that his walk had carried him farther than he had intended to go.

His wife surveyed his countenance swiftly, and she must have been satisfied with what she read there, for she said cheerfully: "I think yore walk done you a heap o' good, Cliff."

To which he replied: "I hope so, Molly."

After breakfast they assembled about the great fireplace in the "settin'" room, all feeling that a crisis had been reached, and that the fate of the Wares was now trembling in the balance. Ruth hovered near Peggy, holding her hand, and showing by her manner an admiration akin to worship.

Clearing his throat, Anderson broke the silence. "I took a walk, Ware, so I could figger out what to do. I am goin' to call you jest plain Ware, becuse I am a plain man and am goin' to treat you as an equal.

"I'm glad you left off bein' a parson, fur I ain't got no respect fur them, at least the sort of cattle I have seed. But I am sorry you left off God. We ain't gwine to quarrel about that now, case I don't know nothin' about Him myself, 'cept what somethin' in here tells me.

"I took my walk to git way off by myself whare I could listen to that somethin', fur I have paid so little 'tention to it all my life that its voice is purty weak. I don't know what it is, but I know that when I made up my mind this mornin' to do what it sed, I felt I wus walkin' on air. Bein' as you wus onct a parson, maybe you kin tell me what it is?"

Ware shook his head sadly, whereupon Ralph held up his hand and said: "Sister Peggy knows."

Turning to her with a look of intense longing in his face, Anderson said: "Miss Peggy, won't you tell me and yore pa too, fur we both need to know."

Peggy felt the earnestness of the man, and like all

great souls, she realized the insignificance of her own knowledge, and it was with deep feeling that she said:

"That is one of the greatest questions ever asked, Mr. Anderson, and I would not undertake to answer it now. If it is for the best that I should be your teacher, together we will find a solution to your problem. It may require a long time, but have no fear, for when a man earnestly desires to know the truth, the knowledge always comes to him, and when he calls, his teacher is at hand."

"Well," said Anderson, "I guess you are gwine to be my teacher ef you will, fur that somethin' what I ain't got no name fur told me to let you all stay in Bucks Pocket, an' when I said 'By gosh! I'll do it, ef it takes the hide', I jest felt like shoutin', and then I said to myself, 'You durned old fool, you'll be gittin' religion the next thing you know, an' that will be the disgracefullest thing you ever 'done in yore life.'"

Everyone joined in the hearty laugh that followed, and Ruth, unable to restrain her joy, rushed to her father and surprised him by kissing his weatherbeaten cheek, exclaiming as she did so: "Oh, daddy, daddy, I can have book larnin', can't I?"

Brushing his cheek with the back of his hand, as though ashamed to be the subject of his daughter's affection, he said: "Wall, it all depends on whuther the parson—I mean Ware—will take the oath or not. Ef he had never been a parson, I might let him off; but bein' as he onct had religion, he must sware an' sware on the Bible, too, ef you all have one, that he won't do no snoopin' roun' fur the revenoos. Will you do it, Ware?"

"An oath is not necessary to bind me, Mr. Anderson, but if you desire it, I have no objection, for under no

circumstances would I partake of your hospitality and then betray you."

Peggy, accompanied by Ruth, had gone to the wagon and now returned, Peggy carrying her mother's Bible.

Bidding Ware place his hand on the book, the King of the Wild Catters placed his hand firmly on Ware's and administered the Wild Catter's oath. It was a weird scene, and all were fascinated by the unusual ceremony.

"They ain't no use havin' Miss Peggy sware," drawled Anderson, "becase she ain't never had no religion, and then somethin' in her eyes would make me trust her with my life any day," saying which he handed the Bible to Peggy. As he did so, a sheet of paper fell from it, on which there were some lines written, so faint as to be almost unintelligible. Peggy picked the paper from the floor, and at the first glance her hands began to tremble violently. Her face blanched, her eyes filled with tears and a sob rose in her throat.

Seeing her agitation, her father, deeply concerned, inquired the cause. In a broken voice she said: "This was written by mother after she realized that the end was near, and she placed it in her Bible, knowing that we would find it. In the hurry and confusion of moving the book was placed where it was not easy to find, and a kind Providence has preserved this precious message until now."

Her father, his voice husky, and his face deathly white, said, "Read it," while Ralph and Virginia clung to Peggy.

"Dear husband and children," and Peggy had to stop and stifle a sob, "the end has come suddenly in the form of one of those hemorrhages that means but a few minutes for preparation. I need no time for this,

as I am ready and unafraid. I am sorry to leave you, and how I do wish you were here to say good-bye. I am not alone, for I feel God's presence, and the room is full of the spirits of loved ones who are here to welcome me.

"After all, dear ones, there is just a thin veil between this side and the other, and when your spiritual eyes are open, there is no veil at all.

"I know now that I will always be near you when you need me, and it would be so sweet to go if I thought you could see me as I shall you.

"I see our dear Florence, now a beautiful young woman, and I see you all happily reunited, and when you are I will be with you.

"I have stopped so often to try to staunch this flow of blood, that I have little time left. And now good-bye. I leave you in God's hands. I will sit by the window watching the road to the last minute, hoping you will come before the end.

"I will place this in my Bible, which I give to Peggy. And now, just a sweet good-bye, for we will meet in the morning."

When she had finished, no one spoke for a long time. Sobs filled the room, and Wilbur Ware sat with his head bowed in his hands, his grief pathetic. Controlling himself at last by a mighty effort, he said: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me! My wife, my own, lead me out of this pit of darkness to Him, if you have found Him on the other side and can hear me!"

Looking toward Simon, who had quietly entered the room, and whose black face was calm and serene, Ware said: "I owe it to you, Simon, that you saved those precious words of my wife, her last message to us. I

must have been mad when I attempted to burn her Bible."

"You sho' wus mad when you burned yore God," said Simon, "an' den I spec you thought dat de Bible wus His book an' dat you burn it too. But I knowed long time ergo dat yore God warn't in de Bible at all, and I wanted to sabe young missus' book case you kin find Him in her Bible bettah dan any Bible, case she find Him dar."

Simon's long speech somewhat relieved the tension, but all waited for Anderson to speak. At length he said: "I know of a vacant piece of land in the Pocket that you kin homestead. It is one hundred and sixty acres of as fine timber as you ever seed, and you kin go ahead and build yore home, and then go to town and enter it. I own most all the land that is wuth anything 'cept this. Whenever anybody didn't suit me, I jest bought 'em out, and now most everybody lives on my land, an' I can have 'em move whenever I want 'em to. They is more fine timber in the Pocket than any other place in the State, an' I recon we ought to make a pile of money outen it ef we knowed how.

"Jest one thing pesters me erbout our 'rangements, and that is him," indicating Simon by a nod of his big shaggy head. "You know it's a law of Bucks Pocket that no nigger can't let the sun go down on him here without riskin' his life. I have allus helped enforce this law, an' I don't see nuthin' to do but fur yore nigger to git outen these diggins quick. I'm pow'ful sorry, but I can't help it."

Nothing could have thrown greater consternation into the Ware camp. If this decree of the master of Bucks Pocket had to stand, it meant that the Wares would have to move on. Ralph and Virginia in terror

ran to Simon and clung to him as though they feared that he would be forcibly torn away from them, crying: "You shan't leave us. We'll go with you." To which Peggy added quietly:

"No, Mr. Anderson, we will not allow Simon to be turned out into the world alone. He has been in the family since before the war, and his faithfulness and devotion is such as is found nowhere except in the colored race. I thank you for your hospitality and kindness, but we must decline to remain longer if Simon is not welcome."

Peggy's father emphasized what his daughter had said, and the fate of the Wares seemed to be again trembling in the balance.

Pathetically, almost frantically, Ruth pleaded with her father, and she was warmly seconded by her mother.

The strong man was greatly perturbed. He knew the temper of his mountaineers, and dreaded to make an issue with them on the race question. He saw what an opportunity it would afford Bud Whitman to wreak vengeance on him and his and the Wares through inoffensive old Simon.

Sensing the difficulty, Simon came to the rescue, offering, as always, to lay himself on the altar of sacrifice. "I ain't goin' to stan' in youah way to findin' a home and peace. 'Corse I hates to leab you, but I kin go to Chattanooga an' fin' work, and maybe sometime Miss Peggy and Ralph and Virginny, and Massa Ware kin come up an' I kin ketch a glimpse ob 'em. An' sides all dat, I kin make bettah wages up dah an' send de money down to help you git started. It don't mattah jes' so you all is happy, case I is happy jest anywhar."

The supreme unselfishness of the old man, now almost eighty, stirred the big, slumbering soul of this kingly mountaineer, and he said: "Wall, folks, ef you want to resk it, I will; but I reckon' it means the biggest fight that wus ever pulled off in Bucks Pocket—an' I recon' it means that Cliff Anderson will be at the fight."

So it was settled that Simon should remain and await developments. Ralph and Virginia clapped their hands and laughed, while the old darky turned away to hide his emotions.

It was the moment of supreme happiness in Ruth's life. She bounded like a fawn from father to mother and then back to Peggy, kissing and caressing each in turn, not slighting Ralph and Virginia. She even shyly, timidly, took Wilbur Ware by the hands, giving them a hearty pressure, and then turned to Simon and said:

"Uncle Simon, I am glad you are goin' to stay. I'll fight a stack o' wild cats fur you ef you need me."

It was soon settled that the Ware children, Peggy, Ralph and Virginia, should remain at the Andersons until their house could be built, and Anderson showed Ware and Simon the boundaries of the tract of land that he proposed to enter, and he and Simon began cutting logs for the house. This required but a few days, and in a short time the logs had all been hauled to the site selected for the erection of the home, and the clap boards rived out for roofing it.

In the meantime Mrs. Anderson, Ruth and Peggy had been busy preparing the material for a big quilting bee to take place on the day of the "house raising." Whatever spare time they could find, Peggy put in teaching Ruth "book larnin'," and her aptitude for learning was surprising. Even Cliff Anderson became

interested and said he wished he had some "book larnin'" himself, and his wife sighed as she, too, no doubt, longed for a sufficient amount to at least enable her to read her almanac so she could tell when the moon was right for planting.

The great day arrived, and the neighbors who had been invited came early to the house raising and quilting. While the men were raising the house, the women would quilt several covers for Peggy. As one of them said, expressing the sentiments of the others. "Pore thing, she ain't got no mammy, an' she looks so much like an angel that it would be a burnin' shame ef she had to do her own quiltin'."

The house was to consist of one room, twenty by twenty feet, with a lean-to and a stick and dirt chimney.

One man sat on each of the four corners of the house who was an expert "notcher," and when one of the big logs was put in place by the husky men on the ground, the notchers fell to work, their axes falling in unison, making a rhythmical music that reverberated through the forest. When the walls had risen sufficiently, some began to lay the puncheon floor, while others built the chimney of thin pieces of white oak, split uniformly and laid so that the cracks were not more than an inch wide. Into these they placed thick mud, smearing it solid on the inside of the chimney so that when it dried it would be safe from the heat and sparks from the fireplace.

By the noon hour, the walls of the house were up and ready for the roof, and two quilts were completed, with two more on the frames.

While some of the women had been quilting, others, the good cooks among them, had been preparing dinner, and old Simon had been busy waiting on them,

carrying water, keeping up the fires, and by his conduct the women, who had at first looked at him askance, became less afraid of him, one of them even remarking: "It ain't so bad to have a nigger round to wait on you ef you can afford it."

When all was ready, Mrs. Anderson took down the horn and blew several long, shrill blasts that echoed and reverberated through the gorges and peaks of Bucks Pocket, and was easily heard a mile away where the men were at work raising the house. No other invitation was necessary, for they all understood this signal. There were many other signals which the women of Bucks Pocket knew how to give on the horn, which by the way was always made from the horn of a big ox. They all knew the warning signal when the revenoos were coming and a different one when they had gone. So Mrs. Anderson knew just what meant to these hungry men "dinner's ready"; and before the echo of the last note had died away, they were all on the ground starting for the home of the Captain, where each felt it a distinguished honor to be invited.

How the men did eat! They had all visited the Captain's smoke house on the way to dinner, and each had a long "swig" of the boss' oldest and best corn whiskey, and they were as keen for food as the hound is for the chase.

Anderson asked Ware if he would join the men in having a "horn," but he said no, which pleased Anderson greatly.

While the men ate, most of their wives visited the smoke house, and it was a merry hour.

It was a wonderful dinner. There was fried ham, boiled ham, roast pork ribs, baked back bones, chicken pie, wild turkey, "possum and taters," corn pone,

"light" bread, hot biscuits, hog jowl, turnips and turnip greens, and so many sorts of pies and cakes that it would have taken an expert to enumerate them.

When all had eaten, and the women told Simon to "set down to the table and 'jest help yoreself'," there was still a mountain of food that he could scarcely see over.

By night the house, including the lean-to, was complete, and they even had time to build a shack for Simon, which was done at the suggestion of Anderson. This kindness touched Simon greatly, and he said: "White folks, you all is too good to me. I don't know how I kin evah pay you back."

One of the men said: "Don't be thankin' us, old man, thank the big boss. We ain't got nuthin' agin you, but we may be runnin' you out o' Bucks Pocket the first thing you know."

Some of the men laughed, while others nodded assent, one of them remarking that there was "shore gwine to be trouble over that nigger when Bud Whitman found out about him."

At that moment, Bud hove into sight. He had not been invited to the working, as he had not made his peace with Anderson, and the latter had no desire that he should do so. He was evidently pretty "full." When he discovered Simon, he bellowed like a bull.

"Whare did that d——d coon come from, and what be you all doin' here social equalitying with him? You are a fine lot of white gents I should remark!" Then turning to Simon, he said:

"Here, you black devil, I'll give you jest one minit to hit the trail."

The men were all violently opposed to "nigger equality," which they very much feared if negroes were allowed to reside in their community; but none of them

were ready to back Bud in his demands, nor were they willing to defend Simon.

Bud repeated his threat, but Simon did not budge. "You, d——d nigger, you act like you ain't afeared of me!" he shouted.

"No, mister, I ain't 'fraid ob nobody but God," quietly replied Simon.

"Well, I ain't afeared of him," screamed Bud, now thoroughly beside himself with rage, "an' I'll jest beat hell outen you!" and he raised his big fist to strike the gray-haired humble old soul, who did not wince.

Before the blow could descend, Peggy, who had just come up with Ruth, unobserved by anyone, so absorbed were they, stepped between Whitman and Simon, so that she would receive the full force of the blow, and Ruth hissed through her teeth:

"Strike another woman, Bud Whitman, you white-livered coward."

The crowd now cried, "Shame! Shame!" and Whitman knew that he had lost for this time; but as he mounted his horse and rode away, he turned around in his saddle, shook his fist at the crowd in general, and Simon in particular, swearing that his day would come and that soon.

CHAPTER SIX

PEGGY FOLLOWS HER VISION

ALL great souls have become so because they had a vision, believed in the vision and lived it. No man can be greater than his vision, but every one can be just as big as he desires to be. We grow into the likeness and image of that which we constantly hold in our thoughts, for our thoughts are the most potent forces in the world.

This great, vital truth is found in all true religions, and is now accepted by the world's leading scientists, philosophers and metaphysicians. That it is scientific is being demonstrated today as never before, and Peggy Ware, her life and work furnish proof on such a big scale, and has been so far-reaching, that I am constrained to believe this great fundamental truth is to be an important factor in our education in the future.

Whence comes this vision; just what it is, and how it may guide us, can, perhaps, best be told by a simple narrative of Peggy Ware's life.

The Wares moved into their new home, the next day after the "house raising."

Wilbur Ware and Simon made some "Georgia" bedsteads, two in the big room, and one in the attic. This "Georgia" bedstead was made by boring two big auger holes in the wall of the house, into which were driven two pieces of timber at right angles to each other, the free ends being nailed to a post resting on the floor. Then slats were laid from the outside railing to a cleat nailed to the wall, and the bedstead was fin-

ished and ready for the straw tick, upon which a big feather bed was placed if the family was so fortunate as to possess one. Most of the households in Bucks Pocket boasted but one feather bed, which was used by "Pa" and "Ma," while the children slept on straw beds. These straw ticks were filled once a year at wheat-threshing time, having become little thicker than your hand in the meantime by reason of constant use. When the ticks were refilled with the new, sweet-smelling straw, the boys and girls enjoyed a great luxury.

There were two big feather beds in the Ware family, and Peggy insisted that they be used by her father, Ralph and Virginia, while she slept on one of new straw given her by Mrs. Anderson.

She reached her attic room by climbing a ladder, which she facetiously called her "golden stairway."

Her first night in the attic room was a memorable one. The wind roared in the forest, and shrieked shrilly between the poorly lined cracks in the walls of the house, while the fine snow sifted through the clapboard roof, falling softly on her face and hair, but there was a warmth in her heart and a glow in her soul, no winter's storm could extinguish.

She reviewed her past life, every event standing out in bold relief. When she was a child not much past ten, she had attended a great religious revival, and although she did not understand the strange doctrine preached by the evangelist, there was awakened in her soul a great longing for something that she did not understand, and that the preacher could not have explained if she had gone to him in her perplexity.

She even went to the "mourner's bench" along with many others whose cries and moans tortured her heart. The preacher told her to lay all her sins on Jesus, and

that his blood would wash them away, and God would forgive her and save her soul from Hell. This meant nothing to her, for she felt no sense of guilt, yet she knew there was an intense longing for something about which all the evangelist's words were the merest jargon.

She went to her mother in her perplexity, and there she found one who understood and could teach her.

"It is the cry of your soul to God, my daughter," her mother had told her. "You are very young to feel this urge of the soul, but I am not surprised. I have always felt that you are much further along life's journey than most people. Souls that have experienced much in the past, feel this urge very early in life.

"David likened this longing to the panting of the thirsty, hunted hart for the water brook. It is instinctive in every human soul, and some time, somewhere, it must come to everyone.

"When once felt, my child, nothing short of soul consciousness and the spiritual life can ever satisfy. When this longing grows into a great desire, the conflict between the flesh, or animal man, and the soul, or spiritual man, begins, never to end, until there is a complete victory or mastery."

Peggy remembered asking her mother what became of a man, if the animal triumphed. "Will God send him to Hell?" she questioned, half frightened.

"I would be untrue to myself if I did not answer you truthfully as I see the light, my child. I believe that the soul always triumphs in the end. The conflict may go on for countless ages, but sometime, somewhere, the soul overcomes, for the soul is God in us, and cannot be conquered by the animal part of man. This is contrary to the teachings of your father's theology, and I never argue with him, for it would do no

good. I have faith that he will some day see the light and have a great and wonderful awakening."

As the years passed this longing in her soul grew more intense, but not until she stood beside her mother's open grave, listening to the words of Simon, did the very heavens seem to open and she felt that her soul had found God.

From that moment she was a new creature. From doubt and uncertainty, she had suddenly found peace and calm within her soul, and an assurance that God was with her.

Tonight she stood again by the grave in the desolate churchyard, but it did not hold her mother. Freed from the burdens of the flesh, the spirit of her mother was with her, guiding her, pointing to the vision she had seen the first night they spent by the camp fire, as they journeyed to "No Man's Land."

She went over the events since that memorable night, unusual events, and felt in her soul an assurance of Divine guidance.

She was now a woman with a mission. Within a few weeks she had leaped over years of spiritual growth and vision, and she knew she was standing at the threshold of her life's work. Her heart beat with enthusiasm, her soul sang for joy as her vision beckoned her.

The beginning must be small, and many difficulties encountered, but she doubted not the final result.

She dared not reveal her vision in its fullness to others at this time. She must nurse it in her own heart until such time as it began to materialize and bear fruit.

At last she slept, and in her sleep her soul visioned the completed work, now being wrought in Peggy's spiritual realm.

When she awoke in the morning, she looked out on a light fall of snow that had covered the ground during the night, but the clouds were gone, and the sun was bursting over the eastern wall of Bucks Pocket.

It was Sunday morning, and after breakfast, she, Ralph and Virginia went to the house commonly called a church, where she was met by Ruth Anderson and a half dozen boys and girls who had been invited by Ruth to come to Sunday School. It was a novel experience for them, and they had come clandestinely, fearing that their parents would not approve, for the "hard shell" preacher who came once a month to preach to them said that Sunday Schools were the work of the devil, but these young people, not being very much afraid of his Satanic majesty, were willing to take a chance at meeting him if he should happen to make his appearance at one of his gatherings.

Peggy read to them out of her mother's Bible, and in a few beautiful words told them what a fine thing it would be if they would all live the clean, unselfish life taught by Jesus.

She also taught them a simple song, and before she had finished, they were all joining in the chorus with great enthusiasm.

She told them that she would open school in the building in the morning if she could obtain Mr. Anderson's permission, as she understood that the house stood on his land.

She did not know that it was the regular day for the "hard shell" preacher, and was quite surprised when some of the older men and women of the neighborhood began to straggle in, the women taking their seats on one side of the house while the men sat on the opposite side.

Just before she concluded a tall, gaunt, rawboned,

hard faced man entered, carrying a pair of "saddle bags" across his arm. He looked daggers at Peggy and seemed about to speak to her, when she said sweetly:

"I hope that we are not intruding, but we have been having a little Sunday School, and are just about through. I did not know that it was the day for church service, but I am so glad, and we will all stay to hear you."

At the words "Sunday School," the "hard shell" preacher seemed choking with rage, and his church members looked at each other as if they were thinking "what an awful sin this young woman has committed. Our children must be rescued from her evil influence."

As the preacher rose to begin his service, Cliff Anderson dropped in, an almost unheard of thing for him to do, and the preacher felt flattered by his presence.

Anderson had overheard Ruth tell her mother that Peggy was going to have Sunday School, and that she intended to be present. So Cliff Anderson, ashamed to let his wife know of his weakness, slipped off like a big, bashful boy, to see what Peggy's Sunday School was like.

Already Peggy had a power over this strong man, that he would have been ashamed to acknowledge to himself, and as he tramped the mile through the snow to the old weather-beaten, desolate-looking "Church house," he kept saying to himself:

"It's nuthin' but idle curiosity, an' I won't never want to go no more."

However, he was late, and his curiosity was not gratified, and he was also trapped and saw no way of retreat. He settled down like a big bear to listen to the sermon that usually occupied from two to three hours.

A doleful hymn was wailed by the preacher, a few of his hearers joining in, trailing several bars behind, ending each stanza with a rising falsetto.

Then a long prayer in which he asked for the destruction of the works of the devil, and all those engaged in his service. Into God's hands he committed the elect in such unctuous tones that no one could doubt that he felt that he had been called and chosen before the foundation of the world.

After the prayer came the sermon. Peggy was amazed. She had never heard anything like it. It sounded to her like the weird teachings of some ancient priest in the days of pre-historic man. As he proceeded and warmed up to his subject, his voice rose to a high pitch, and the words poured forth as if they had been shot from a catapult.

He held his right hand up to his ear, for what apparent reason no one could tell, unless Ralph's explanation was the correct one when he said: "He shouted so loud he was afraid he would break his ear drum, and put his hand over his ear to protect it."

As he became exhausted for breath, he would catch it with an indrawing sound, ending his words where he paused for breath with an "Ah."

Finally it became a monotonous sing-song that put half his hearers to sleep, but this did not disturb him any more than would have a dozen squalling babies in the house. He said that when his hearers got their little vessels full they could go to sleep, and that he enjoyed crying babies because it was good for his voice, as he was thus compelled to exercise it by shouting so that he could be heard above the screaming brats.

He talked about God's seed, and the devil's seed, saying that each had sowed his own seed and that each would reap his own harvest; and that God had

no chance to get the devil's children, and the devil could not get God's children. He said that all of God's children were destined for heaven and eternal glory, and the devil's for hell and everlasting torture. He said that our destiny is fixed before we are ever born into the world, and that even those who die in infancy are under the same awful decree, and that hell is full of infants not longer than a span.

Ralph whispered to Peggy, and said: "I don't see why God let the devil sow any seed."

Now, almost exhausted, he turned his rolling eyes toward Peggy, a dreadful condemnation shining in them.

"We have in our midst-ah," he shouted, "one of the devil's agents-ah, in the form of a woman-ah, teaching Sunday School-ah, and the wrath of God-ah will visit this community-ah, if you don't drive her from our midst-ah!"

This shot was too much for Cliff Anderson. He had been watching Peggy's white, pained face, and as he saw her wince as though struck with a whip and cower on the hard slab bench as if she expected the frenzied preacher to attempt to carry out his injunction to expel her, he sprang from his seat, his face stern, his voice cold. "Hol 'on thare, Parson, I recon' you done finished yore sarmon, an' I am sayin' the benediction. You are all dismissed, an' jackasses won't bray here no more as long as Cliff Anderson owns this house. And there will be Sunday School here every Sunday mornin' if Miss Peggy says so. This is her house to do as she pleases with, an' I am here to back her up.

"I hain't never seed an angel, but my mother used to tell me about 'em, but ef Miss Peggy ain't one, then I never 'spect to see one; an' ef God ever did send an angel anywhere in this world, he has sent this one to

Bucks Pocket, an' ef he knows what we pore devils are doin' down here in this world, He shore knows we need her.

"Meetin' is now over."

And when Cliff Anderson said it was over, the preacher knew that it was time to take his "saddle riders," mount his old gray mule and ride away, feeling in his heart that he had been casting his pearls before swine, and that Cliff Anderson and all Bucks Pocket belonged to the devil.

When he had gone, Peggy recovered, and began to laugh, a little hysterically at first, and then they all laughed and the spell was broken, and the spirit of the devil that had been brooding over the meeting was exorcised.

"I was frightened so," Peggy exclaimed. "Is the man insane, Mr. Anderson?"

"Oh, no, Miss Péggy, he's jest preachin' one sort of theology. I understan' there are a lot of different brands, and to me they are all alike, becuse I ain't got no use fer none of 'em."

With this, he introduced everyone to Peggy, and all fell instantly under the spell of her remarkable personality.

She asked Anderson if she could use the house for a school, and when told that it belonged to her to do as she pleased with, she said: "Oh, I am so thankful, Mr. Anderson, and I will begin school here in the morning."

Ruth clapped her hands, and said: "I am coming, and will tell every one I know."

In a few minutes the people had been lifted from gloom to sunshine, and each went his way with a new hope singing in his heart. And in Peggy's soul there echoed an anthem of praise like unto the music of the spheres.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CLIFF ANDERSON ATTENDS A FIGHT

BUD Whitman had been "nursing his wrath to keep it warm" since his encounter with Simon on the day of the "house raising," and, in fact, since the episode of the Christmas eve dance at Cliff Anderson's. He fed his evil passions constantly on the devil's own fuel, "wild cat" whiskey.

Bud had been a steady drinker since he was a fifteen-year-old lad, and now, at twenty-four, he could carry a bigger load and walk a chalk line straighter than any man in Bucks Pocket. He believed in the potency of "good licker," as he termed it, and he could not understand how anyone could be a full-fledged man who did not drink.

He possessed a tremendous physique, which had not been seriously impaired by the abuse he had given it. He was slightly above six feet, with broad shoulders, a neck like a prize-fighter, and a body a fit model for a statue of Hercules. At the log rollings, no man could "pull him down" with the hand spike, and many of them had been brought to their knees with Bud at the other end of the "spike."

In a rough and tumble fight, he was more than a match for the best man in the community. In fact, it was said by his admirers that he had whipped two men at once. Some believed that he had a "yellow streak," as all bullies do, and one old ex-confederate veteran said that if he had to face cold steel he would

run. The old soldier, furthermore, said that when he was in the army, he observed that it was the quiet man at home who loved peace and always wanted to avoid a scrap that made the bravest and most daring soldier, while the cross-roads bully always showed the "white feather" when forced to face almost certain death.

Along with Whitman's love for whiskey, he had inherited a bitter hatred for "niggers." If asked for the reason of his antipathy, he could not have told you. "I jest ain't got no use for a d——d nigger," would have been the extent of his explanation. And this same unreasonable and unreasoning hatred prevails to a great extent in many of the rural districts of the South. It was particularly so in Bucks Pocket, and so the ground was already well prepared for Bud's propaganda against Simon.

It may be partially due to the fact that the negroes before the war called all white people who did not own slaves "po' white trash," feeling that they were much better than the poor whites because they belonged to the aristocracy.

An old couplet is attributed to them that ran something like this:

"My name is Sam,
An' I don't gib a dam,
I'd ruther be a nigger
Than a po' white man."

A little profane, no doubt, but it expressed a feeling more or less prevalent in some parts of the South before the great conflict.

Again the feeling may have been due in part to the sufferings of these same "po' whites" during and immediately after the bloody conflict between the States. For, be it remembered, that the "po' white trash" fur-

nished a large portion of the soldiers who fought for the Southern Confederacy, and they were such soldiers as the world had never seen before. They were fighting for a sacred cause, as they were told by their leaders, the slave-holders, and when the South had grounded her arms, and the slaves were freed, and the ballot placed in their hands, these same "po' whites" had reached the conclusion that the negro was the cause of the war, and consequently of their sufferings.

Whatever the cause, the fact remains, and among the younger generation in the South in certain communities, this feeling is as intense today, and perhaps more so, than at any time during or just after the war.

Fired by that hatred and stimulated by strong whiskey, Bud Whitman had organized a band of white capers for the purpose of hanging Simon, or running him out of the community. His intention was really to hang him, but he did not think it best to disclose this fully until the psychological moment arrived.

As a prelude to his program he suggested that they leave a written warning for Simon to leave the community, knowing that it would not be obeyed.

He said to his followers that this would give them clear consciences in case the "coon got tangled up in a rope and broke his neck."

Bud was deputized to write the warning as he was the only one in the plot who had any "book larnin'." After long and painful labor he scrawled the following note, and that night stole up quietly in the dark and pinned it to the door of Simon's shack:

"NOTIS

"We all agin nigger equalizin', an' won't stand fer it. So ef you don't git befo' temorry nite, we'll rope you.

"WHITE CAPS."

Simon found the note early the next morning and hastened to Peggy. When she read it, her heart stood still, and she went in great alarm to her father. He had been sinking further into the slough of despond as the days passed, and now it would have taken an earthquake to arouse him. So he attempted to quiet her fears, and told her that it was only a practical joke to frighten Simon, and that nothing would come of it, advising her to say nothing about it, as it might create unnecessary commotion.

Silenced, but not convinced, Peggy went to her school, while Simon aided Ware in his work of clearing land. As the day passed and Peggy enthused over her teaching, as she always did, the fear at her heart for the safety of Simon gradually left her, and by night she could even smile at the blundering attempt to frighten him and the Ware family.

With Simon it was quite different. All day he and Wilbur Ware worked side by side, rarely speaking a word, for Ware's whole manner toward Simon had changed since the death of his wife. Formerly he took a great pleasure in conversing with the venerable old negro, but now he maintained a stoical silence upon which Simon was too tactful and too respectful to intrude.

He lived over many incidents of his past life, and if his thoughts about the goodness of God could have been recorded they would have been an inspiration to his learned white brothers.

Simon felt an impending danger, but not for the world would he have caused anyone a moment's uneasiness on his account. He expected the white capers to carry out their threat, but felt no fear.

Afterward, in talking to Peggy about his thoughts, he said: "I c'ncluded dat it wus the bes' way out fer

all ob us, fer you all wouldn't let me leab 'thout gwine yoselfs, an' I said 'You mus' stay heah whar Miss Peggy kin lead dese pore souls out ob dey sin an' ignance, an' Simon jest as ready to go now as he will be ef he lib to be as old as Methusalum, an' ef de white caps git 'im, dey won't git nuffin but his ole wore-out body, an' den his soul kin shine widout any 'structions."

Peggy was nervous as night approached, and even her father stirred from his lethargy. They did not retire as early as usual, even Ralph and Virginia were wide-awake, and declared they wanted to sit up a while longer. Something was in the air that all could feel, and no one could define.

Simon was one of the few negroes who had donned the Confederate uniform and followed his master, Captain Lee, to the army, but he had done so through his great love for his master and his wife. Simon was not interested in the conflict further than to protect his "white folks," as he fondly called the Lees, and while he had no desire to shed the blood of his fellow man, he was unafraid of danger himself.

All these years, he had preserved his uniform as a private soldier, never exhibiting it to anyone except the Ware children. He had faced death in this uniform many times, and feeling that he must face him again tonight, he opened the box which he called his "chist," took out the faded gray, brushed it as though he were going to wear it on some great occasion, and put it on. And thus he waited by his fire, the coming of the White Caps, picking his banjo and singing softly:

"I'se comin', I'se comin'

Fur my head is bendin' low.

Ah hear dose gentle voices callin'

Ol' Black Joe."

A loud knock at the door caused him to lay down his banjo, put on the cap that belonged to his uniform, and in answer to a gruff "Come out here, nigger," he responded:

"Yes, white folks, I'se ready."

It was a beautiful night, the full moon casting its rays into the deepest recesses of the Pocket caused the sharp peaks that rose at various points along the edge of the valley to appear like giant sentinels watching grimly over the scene below.

The White Cappers were mounted on horses and wore white caps that completely covered their heads and faces, with small openings through which the wearer could see. As they lurked in the shadows of the trees waiting the commands of their leader, they made a weird, fantastic picture that might well cause the stoutest heart to quail. If the White Cappers had expected to find a cowering, cringing old negro, they were treated to a great surprise, for when Simon opened the door and walked forth into the moonlight, he did so with a steady step and his voice was without a tremor as he said:

"Gen'men, please don't make no noise, case I hope you won't 'sturb Massa Ware an' de chilluns."

The leader's reply was a coarse, uneasy sort of laugh, for the serenity of the old man nonplussed him. "We'd jest as soon hang the ex-parson, too, ef he butts in!" spoke the leader, whose voice betrayed Bud Whitman.

"Why didn't you leave when you got our warnin'?" he demanded.

"Becase I'se a free American citizen, fearin' God, servin' my country an' doin' nobody no harm, an' doin' all de good I kin, an' ef I ain't got no right to lib heah,

den I got no home under de flag, an' I mout as well go ober yondah whare I'll be welcome."

"All right, Mister Nigger, we'll send you over in three shakes of a sheep's tail," said Whitman. Producing a rope in which the loop was already tied, he threw it around Simon's neck, knocking his cap off as he did so, and started in the direction of a near-by tree, saying, "Come on, fellers, we'll string him up to that big limb yonder."

The riders had all dismounted by this time, and tethered their horses in the thicket near Simon's cabin.

As Whitman was about to throw the free end of the rope over the limb, one of the white cappers stepped forward and said:

"Hol' on a minit, Bud, I want to ax the old man a few questions."

"He ain't a man," said Bud. "He is nuthin' but a d——d nigger, an' we ain't got no time fur questions."

Whitman, as usual, was full of corn whiskey, and a good number of his followers had also imbibed freely for the occasion, but a few of them were sober.

"Wall, I guess you'll take time, Bud Whitman, whuther you want to er not. I wus four years whare I smelt powder and faced bullets, fightin' fer the South, an' I wore the same uniform this old nigger got on, an' I am gwine to ax him whare he got it."

Before Simon could reply, Wilbur Ware and Peggy appeared on the scene. Ralph had started down to Simon's cabin to tell him goodnight, as was his custom, and seeing the White Cappers with a rope about Simon's neck, he fled to the house in breathless excitement, exclaiming: "They are hanging Simon!"

"Run for Mr. Anderson!" exclaimed Peggy, "and we will go to Simon."

Virginia was left at the house, crying piteously, saying: "Oh, God, don't let them kill Uncle Simon"; while Ralph sped on the wings of the wind to Cliff Anderson's.

Before Ralph had finished his brief story Anderson had seized a gun, and was bounding like a tiger toward the scene of danger; and Ruth, deaf to her mother's pleadings, was following hard upon the footsteps of her father, leaving Ralph far behind.

The scene that greeted Wilbur Ware aroused him from his lethargy, and galvanized him into action. At one bound he leaped upon Bud Whitman, and although inferior in strength, the unexpected rush bore Bud to the ground, but only for a moment. The young Hercules threw off his antagonist, and sprang to his feet, exclaiming as he did so: "Grab him, boys!" And obeying the command of their leader, a half dozen men seized the struggling man and held him, while one of them produced a rope and proceeded to "hog tie" him.

Thus rendered helpless, Ware began to plead with the mob. Whitman, thoroughly enraged, said:

"Gag him and shet his d——d mouth."

As no one offered to obey this command, he cut a stick, placed it forcibly between Ware's teeth, fastened a cord to each end of the stick, and then brought the two ends of the cord to the back of his head and tied them. This accomplished, he once more seized the end of the rope that was still around Simon's neck, and said: "Come on!"

In the excitement no one seemed to have observed Peggy. Acting swiftly, as her mind always did, she determined to appeal to the better self in these rough, half-drunken men. Mounting a low stump, so she could be seen, she said:

"Men, in God's name I command you to wait a minute! You must hear me for your own soul's welfare!"

Fearing the result of her pleading, Bud said angrily:

"We dont want no petticoat preachin' here. Come ahead, men, an' let's git through this job."

At this juncture, three or four men came to the rescue, and one of them, speaking for the others, said:

"Hold on a minit, boss, an' hear what the lady has to say. My kids are gwine to school to her, an' they say she is as good as a angel; an' I say she's gwine to be treated like a lady," to which a number responded: "That's right! that's right!"

Grumbling and cursing, Whitman reluctantly laid down the rope, drew a bottle out of his pocket, took a drink, saying: "Cut it short, Miss Smarty."

"I want to tell you a little story, and I want you to listen to every word I say," and the music of her voice thrilled every man present.

"Simon belonged to my grandfather before the war. He bought Simon just after he and my grandmother married, and in a few months the war broke out, and my grandfather went to the front, and Simon, then a young man, insisted on going along to take care of "Massa-Cap'n," as he called my grandfather, Raymond Lee, who was a cousin of General Robert E. Lee, whom many of you followed and loved."

"That we did; that's so!" exclaimed some of the older men present.

"My grandfather was shot down while leading his company in a desperate charge, and as he lay on the battlefield, the bullets falling like hail, Simon, facing what seemed like certain death, found him, and carried him back out of the danger zone. His wound was a mortal one, and it was Simon who ministered

to him in his last hours, and brought his dying message to my grandmother. After that he became General Stonewall Jackson's body servant, and was with that great Christian soldier when he passed over the river.

"When the war was over, he returned home, no longer a slave, but free to go where he pleased. He chose to remain with my grandmother, and my mother, who was a little girl.

"When my mother grew up and married my father, and my grandmother died, Simon cast his lot with them, and now he is still serving the grandchildren of his beloved Captain Lee.

"He is worthy of the faded uniform he has seen fit to put on, and I can testify that his life has been one of unselfish devotion to others."

Bud Whitman had grown restless. He felt that his followers were being swayed by Peggy. He had passed his bottle among the younger men, on whom he felt he could depend in the event of a division of sentiment, and he now prepared to bring an end to Peggy's discourse.

Brutally he said: "All that stuff is a d—d lie! Come on an' let's finish our job."

As the words "d—d lie" fell from his lips, a man sprang from the protecting shadow of an immense oak and bounded into the center of the group like a mountain lion, and before any one could move, he leveled a gun at Bud's heart, and with his voice choking with rage, hissed:

"Take that back, Bud Whitman, or I'll kill you before you kin say Jack Robinson. Nobody kin call Miss Peggy a d—d liar an' git by with it."

Whitman looked at the determined man through

the peep holes in his mask and, knowing that he dare not trifle with him, he said in an assumed voice:

"You are mistaken in your man, pardner. I ain't Bud Whitman, but I am willin' to take back what I said about the lady. I meant the nigger was a d—d liar."

"Hold on thare, Whitman, fur I know it's you. He ain't no liar either," said Anderson. "I am gwine to tell you men what I know."

"I been standin' thare in the shader listin' to Miss Peggy, hopin' that I would not have to butt in, becace I don't hunt no fights ef I can help it. My fightin' days are most over, an' I hope to live in peace the rest of my time. But when I heard her called a liar, it wuz time fur Cliff Anderson to talk."

"I wuz a soldier myself, and wore the same gray uniform what Simon has on. I never knowed until tonight that Miss Peggy's grandfather wus Captain Lee. He wus my captain, too, an' I wus shot down by his side when he fell. He wus leadin' a charge, an' wus at least twenty feet ahead of his company, an' I wus keepin' up with him. All at once it seemed like a rain o' fire an' brimstone. I seed him fall an' wus stoopin' over to pick him up when somethin' hit me an' I dropped. The company wus driv back an' thare we lay fer a long time, the blood a-oozin' out, an' the sheets o' fire sweepin' over us."

"I said: 'Cap'n, are you hurt much?' An' he says: 'I don't know, Anderson, but I feel queer, like it's all over with me.'"

"And then he said: 'How badly are you hurt?' And I said: 'Not much, jest shot through both legs an' one shoulder.' Then I saw a nigger wearin' a gray uniform comin', an' lookin' everywhere, like he wus huntin' somethin'. I thought to myself, 'The

durned fool will fall in a minit; becace I didn't see how anything could stand up in that hail of lead. And he didn't dodge a single time, an' I wondered ef he wus deaf.

"I had been callin' fer water, and Captain Lee said: 'I think I got about a drink in my canteen, ef you can git to it, becace I think I am gwine whare there is a great river of water in a few minutes, becace I see it, and it's beautiful.'

"I said, "No, I won't drink yore water,' but he said: 'I am still your captain and command you!' Then I drank the water in his canteen, an' the next thing I knowed, the nigger soldier wus standin' over us, sayin':

"Bless God, I done foun' you, Mass Lee. Is you bad hurt?"

"And my brave captain said: 'Just slightly wounded, Simon; but there is Mr. Anderson, a brave soldier who is badly wounded, take him to the rear, and then come back for me.'

"I said, 'No,' and would rather have died than leave him there, but I wus too weak to help myself. So when he said: 'Simon, you black rascal, carry him off the field, and if you resist, Anderson, I'll have you court-martialed and shot.'

"Simon picked me up jest like I wus a baby an' carried me back to the stretcher bearers, an' the last I ever seed of him he wus goin' back into the rainin' bullets for his captain.

"And I never knowed till tonight that Simon is the man that carried me off the battlefield in his arms, and I want to say they won't be no hangin' here tonight, an' that Simon won't leave Bucks Pocket till he is good an' ready."

The gauntlet was thrown down to Bud Whitman, and if he did not accept it his prestige would be gone forever.

One of his henchmen said: "Don't let him bluff you, Bud."

For answer he said: "I guess this are a fight to a finish. All of you who are fer hangin' the nigger stand over here by me."

About half of the crowd, composed of the young men, moved to their leader's side, while the older ones, some of them ex-confederate veterans, grouped around Anderson.

Grabbing the rope once more, Whitman said: "Come on and let's hang him quick an' fight later."

Without a word, Anderson leaped to Simon's side, snatched the rope from Whitman's hand, and removed the noose from Simon's neck.

Drawing himself up to his full height, he said: "Bud Whitman, if you lay your hands on him again, you will have to whip me."

"An' that's what I am gwine to do, you white-livered nigger lover," and with that Whitman lunged at Anderson, dealing him an unexpected blow on the chin. Before Anderson could recover, Whitman drew a "gun" from his pocket.

Ruth had been a silent spectator to everything, watching every move as a cat would watch a mouse. Like a shadow she had crept up and stood just behind her father when Bud struck him. When Whitman drew his revolver, Ruth sprang on him like a wildcat dropping from a tree, snatched the gun from his hand and was in the act of shooting him before he realized what had happened. Her father caught the hammer of the revolver as it fell, thus saving the life of the leader of the White Cappers.

One of Whitman's followers cried, "No shootin'; let 'em fight it out fair."

Bud was now beside himself, and feeling that Anderson was no match for him physically, he said: "All right, old man, ef you will lay down yore gun, we will settle it—jest you an' me, and ef you whip me you'll be the boss, an' ef I whip you, we'll hang the nigger."

"All right, Bud," responded Anderson, "but I want you to take your disguise off so you kin see what you're doin', an' so everybody kin see yore cowardly face."

Anderson had already laid aside his coat, and with shirt sleeves rolled up, waited for his antagonist, who, feeling that his attempted disguise was no longer worth while, took off his mask, threw aside his coat and hat, and ran at Anderson, striking out furiously and blindly.

Anderson parried his blows, and delivered one straight from the shoulder squarely on Whitman's jaw. It staggered him, and increased his rage. Again he plunged, and this time caught the elder man in his powerful arms, and in another moment they were rolling on the ground, Whitman fighting furiously, raining blow after blow on the face of Anderson, who seemed to be at the mercy of the younger man until by a mighty effort Anderson managed to turn Whitman on the bottom and fasten his powerful grasp on Whitman's throat. As he choked him with one hand, he pounded him with his free fist, bringing the blood every time his hard, bony knuckles came in contact with Bud's face. Bud's eyes began to protrude from their sockets, his face to turn black, and he feebly whispered, "Take him off."

"Are you licked?" Anderson inquired, as he tight-

ened his grip on Whitman's windpipe, and Bud, unable to even whisper, nodded "Yes."

As the fight progressed and Ruth was restrained from taking further part in it, she turned to Peggy, who had released her father from the rope and gag that bound him, and was watching with white, set face the only fight she had ever witnessed in her life, and said: "Peggy, pray fer daddy," and Peggy answered:

"I am praying for him, Ruth, with every breath."

Two of the men carried Bud to his horse, placed him on it, and, clinging to the horn of his saddle, the fallen bully rode slowly out of sight.

When the echo of his horse's footsteps had died away, and Anderson had gotten his second wind, he said:

"Men, take off your masks, fer I want to talk to you, an' I want to look into yore eyes."

They all obeyed with alacrity, for in their rough hearts they loved Cliff Anderson.

"Boys," he continued, "I want to say jest one word more about Simon and the nigger folks in gen'ral. For four years the North and 'South fought over them, and most of them staid at home, worked the land, took keer of the women and children, an' in all that four years there wus never a nigger outrage on a white woman, or a nigger that betrayed his master.

"I wus fightin' all that time, an' my folks never owned any slaves, but ef they had, an' they wus sich as ole Simon, I'd want to build a monymment to 'em, 'en ef I'm livin' when ole Simon goes, I'll see that he has the biggest tombstone in Bucks Pocket.

"Now, all of you that are satisfied fer Simon to stay here, say 'I'."

A mighty chorus of "I's" went up as from one man.

"Jest one thing more, men," he said, "an' then I'll quit afore I git to be a stump speaker. You might want me to run fer the Legislature ef I git to be too much of a talker.

"I guess I been a sort of bell-wether in Bucks Pocket, an' I got a feelin' sense Miss Peggy come that I ain't been settin' a very good example. I been pestered a lot of late, an' I'm thinkin' erbout turnin' over a new leaf, ef I warn't jest kinder ashamed to, an' afeard you'd all laugh at me an' say I "had religion," an' I'd as soon be caught with the hives.

"I wonder ef you'd all like to see things more de-center here in the Pocket? All of you what would, hold up yore hands." With one accord every hand went in the air.

"An' will you all back Miss Peggy in whatever she wants to do? Ef you will, take off yore hats an' place yore hands on yore hearts."

Every hat came off, and standing bare-headed in the moonlight, each man placed his free hand on his breast, thus pledging his loyal and undying support.

Peggy, moved deeply by this pledge which meant so much, coming in the way it did, could only respond:

"I thank you with all my heart, and I hope that I shall prove worthy of your confidence."

"It's time to go home now," said Anderson, and suiting his action to his words, he was shouldering his gun that had been leaning against a tree, and the others were getting ready to take their departure, when Simon said:

"Hole on, white folks, jest a minit. I wants to ax you all to 'scuse me fer givin' you so much trouble, an' I hope it won't neber happen no mo'."

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE MYSTERIOUS MAN FROM NOWHERE

PEGGY'S school had grown until the old "Hard Shell" "meetin'" house could no longer accommodate her pupils. She had conceived the idea of organizing a department for the adult illiterates, many of them far past the meridian of life. She wanted to teach them to read and write, and to instill into their minds the great fundamental principles on which she had founded her school.

She could not talk to her father about either her plans or perplexities. His heart was embittered, his vision clouded. The foundations of his old dogmatic theology had collapsed, and now he had gone to the other extreme, denouncing the Church, denying God, and scoffing at patriotism and unselfishness. This burden she must bear in silence, trying to show him the light as best she could. There was little that she could say or do to help him, for he had reached that stage where the soul must fight its great battle without human aid.

Peggy turned instinctively to Cliff Anderson, the grim old King of the Wild Catters. One day she said to him: "What are we going to do about more room for our school, Mr. Anderson? You know it has already outgrown our present quarters."

"I don't recon it's 'our school,' Miss Peggy, 'cause I ain't had no hand in it yit. It's yore school, but I am

willin' to help you. Ef you need more room, I'll git the fellers together and we'll cut the logs and build you a bigger house."

"Oh, Mr. Anderson, you are just splendid!" Peggy exclaimed, rapturously. "Can you build a house with three rooms?"

"Well, ef you need one that big, we'll build it, but I am wond'rin' how you gwine to teach in three rooms at once, onless you can divide yorself up." The old man grinned at the thought of this difficulty.

"I'll manage that, Mr. Anderson; I am thinking of using one room for the older people—like yourself and Mrs. Anderson.

The big Wild Catter laughed. He fairly roared. Peggy had never heard him laugh before, and few others had ever had that privilege. Peggy joined in his merriment, which pleased him greatly.

"You don't mean to teach book larnin' to old devils like me, Jep Carnes, Mart Suttles an' sich like, do ye? It's the best joke I ever heerd in my life."

Again he roared with laughter, and Peggy did not interrupt him until he assumed his usual stoical calm.

"It may seem like a joke to you, Mr. Anderson, but to me it's the most beautiful, the most wonderful work I could possibly undertake. What a fairy land it will open up for you, and you will be as eager and enthusiastic as one of my school boys."

"But I don't see how you kin teach so many folks, Miss Peggy. You are gwine to need more help."

"The teachers will come as we need them. God will provide the things we need out of His great store house, if we are doing His work and have faith."

"You are a funny gal, Miss Peggy, an' I don't understand all you talk about, but I feel somethin' that makes me have faith in you, and I'm comin' to yore

school, an' trust you. An' I'll round up every blamed old Wild Catter in Bucks Pocket, an' make 'em come, so they can't laugh at me. Ef they is any laughin', we'll all laugh together."

It did not take long to build the three-room log house, and to seat it with crude desks and benches made by the men. Peggy announced that on a certain Monday morning her school for the older people would open.

Before the appointed hour Cliff Anderson and Molly arrived, followed by all the "old Wild Catters" and their wives in Bucks Pocket. Most of the men carried their long squirrel rifles, which they deposited in the rear of the room where Peggy had erected a big black-board.

The men took their seats on one side of the room, while the women sat on the opposite side. Peggy observed that the women carried their snuff boxes, while most of the men were chewing tobacco, but she made no comment.

One of the men spat a great mouthful of tobacco juice on the floor, and Anderson saw him. "See here, Bill Suttles, they ain't gwine to be no spittin' on this floor. You fellers must either swaller yore ambeer or throw yore cuds outdoors. We ain't gwine to have Miss Peggy teachin' book larnin' to a lot of tobaccy worms. I'll jest pass the collection box an' we'll start right. 'Course the ladies will keep their snuff, becace they don't expectationate like the men."

So saying, he picked up a small box that had been made to hold Peggy's chalk, and proceeded to collect the "cuds."

When he had performed this service, throwing his collection out in the yard, and returned to his seat, Peggy arose and said:

"I am so glad to see so many of my dear friends here this morning. You don't know how it fills my heart with joy, for I feel that we are starting a work here that will bear fruit all over this beautiful land of ours.

"I want to help open up to you a new world so full of wonderful things that I tremble with excitement as I stand before you. I know you will live to see the day when you will thank God for the step you are taking this morning.

"I am going to begin our day's work just as we do in our school for boys and girls. The first thing we do is to repeat the preamble to the Constitution of the United States. Not one of my boys and girls had ever heard of it when school began, but now they know it by heart, and anyone of them can give you an intelligent talk on its meaning.

"I will write it on the blackboard, read it to you, and then we will all repeat it together, very slowly, so that we can think of its meaning.

Taking a piece of chalk, she wrote :

"We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

She read it to them, and it did Peggy's heart good to see their intense interest. Then she said: "We will all repeat it together."

"We, the people," rang out the sweet musical voice, and men and women, some aloud, some in half whispers, repeated, "We, the people."

"Of the United States," said Peggy. "Of the United

States," responded her audience, a little less scared by the sound of their own voices.

When they had finished, Peggy could see a new light dawning in the weather-beaten, wrinkled faces of these men and women who had never known anything but poverty and hard work.

"Don't you think that is wonderful?" asked Peggy.

No one replied, for all were too timid to express an opinion, even if they had one. Besides the Big Cap'n had not spoken. They wanted to hear what Anderson had to say. He was the bell-wether, and if he jumped the fence most of them would follow, or break their necks trying.

"I like the way it sounds, Miss Peggy," Anderson declared, "as fur as I understand it. It says 'we, the people.' Does that mean all the people, or jest the prohibitionists, the rich bugs, the preachers, an' the folks that live in cities an' make big wages, wear store 'close', ride in automobiles, an' laugh at us when we go to town wearin' our homespun an' brogan shoes, callin' us 'Rubes' an' 'Hay Seeds'?"

"It means just what it says, Mr. Anderson. 'We, the people,' means all the people—you and I, and each one of us.

"When this glorious Constitution was adopted, our forefathers were thinking of all the people, and framed a document that would forever guarantee to every boy and girl the same equality of opportunity. Under this Constitution, each of us is guaranteed protection in his rights, and is guarded against any encroachments on his liberty.

"Under this Constitution, Abraham Lincoln, the railsplitter, became the President of the United States, and most all the big men of our country have come from the plain, simple American homes where they

were taught to love God and revere the Constitution of our great country."

"I use to sing 'We'll hang Abe Lincoln to a sour apple tree' when I was fightin' fer the South," Anderson declared, "an' I thought he wus meaner than the devil. After the war a Yankee told me Lincoln wus once a railsplitter, wore home-made close, sold 'licker,' an' never had no religion, except to love the pore an' down-trodden, an' I said: 'I'm an Abe Lincoln man frum this time on, an' ef my country ever needs me, I'll fight jest as hard fur her as I did fur the South.

"An' ef the Constitution wus made fur all the people, North an' South, rich an' pore, prohibitionists an' them that's agin prohibition, then I'm fur it, fust, last, an' all the time; an' I'm glad our country ain't divided, so ef the Constitution is ever in danger the North an' South kin fight shoulder to shoulder to defend it.

"What does it mean 'by securin' the blessings of liberty,' Miss Peggy?" the old man asked earnestly.

"It means that the people of this country are the freest people in the world, and that this freedom can never be taken away from us as long as we uphold the Constitution.

"For over one hundred years this inspired document has secured to every man the right to pursue his occupation, to live his life just as he pleased so long as he was decent and did not attempt to encroach on the rights of others. And our posterity for thousands of generations will continue to enjoy these blessings of liberty, if we do not allow the enemies of the people who are trying to destroy our Constitution and set up some other form of so-called government to divide our citizens into warring classes and factions, each seeking some selfish advantage over the other, forgetting the first three words in the preamble, 'We, the people'."

"Well, all I got to say about a feller that would do that is that he ain't no good American an' needs a visit from the Ku-Klux."

"We won't Ku-Klux them, Mr. Anderson; we will educate them, teach them to be good Americans."

"There never was a time in the history of the world when there was such a crying need for genuine men and women, educated in the right way. The opportunities are limitless, the harvest is ripe, but the proper kind of laborers are few."

"Our ideals are all wrong; we have lost the vision of Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln. We have set up a false standard of 'get more' rather than 'give more.' In the mad race, men have become blinded, and they inveigh bitterly against our country, our laws, our Constitution. They curse the Church, scoff at Jesus Christ, and deny God."

"I am going to try to sound anew the old note of freedom, of reverence, of love of country, love of God, love of our fellow man, here in these rugged mountains, praying that it may help kindle afresh the music of human sympathy and Divine love in the souls of our people."

"The first words I want you to learn to write are 'God' and 'the Constitution,' for this is the rock on which we will build our school in Bucks Pocket."

"The next part of our opening exercises consists in singing our national hymn. Our boys and girls know every word of it, and it is wonderful to hear them sing it each morning. I will sing it for you, and by and by you will all learn it."

Ah, that golden voice. It might have proceeded from the angelic choir. No wonder these mountaineers were spellbound as Peggy sang "My country, 'tis of thee, Sweet land of liberty."

They had never heard it before, and to them it was a pean of thanksgiving, of love, of loyalty. More than one withered cheek was wet with tears of which no one seemed ashamed.

Then followed "Nearer, my God, to Thee," and all heads bowed reverently as Peggy, at its close, repeated the Lord's prayer. When she said, "Our Father, who art in Heaven," each felt that Peggy was really talking to God, and that He stood there beside her.

The opening services concluded, Peggy said:

"We will now have our first lesson." She proceeded to make the letters of the alphabet, beginning with "A." Then the slow process of teaching her "pupils" their "A B C's" began. No set of school boys or girls were ever more eager to learn than were these gray-haired men and women. A few of them learned surprisingly fast, while some of them had great difficulty in learning "A."

"Write yore name on the board, Miss Peggy," asked Anderson. "I want to see ef it looks like you."

Smilingly she complied, writing "Peggy Ware."

"Well, it looks like you," he said, "but it ain't half as purty as you are."

"Be ashamed of yoreself, Cliff," scolded his wife, as every one laughed, and Peggy blushed.

"Now write his name," said Molly Anderson, indicating her husband by a nod of the head.

Peggy wrote "Cliff Anderson," and a murmur of admiration went round the room.

"Huh!" exclaimed Molly, "'tain't half as ugly as Cliff is." This sally brought forth a general laugh, and in the midst of much merriment and good-natured chaffing, Peggy dismissed her pupils for the day.

Cliff Anderson lingered after the others had gone.

"I wanted to tell you," he said to Peggy, "that I'm beginnin' to see things I never thought about before, an' it makes me want to do somethin' fer our boys an' gals. They ain't got no chance without some book larnin', and all the book larnin' in the world ain't gwine to make 'em good citizens onless it is the right sort. I think I git yore idee, that they must larn to love their country, an' to stand by the flag, in spite of the devil, because the flag stands fur liberty an' freedom. Givin' every one of these mountain boys an' gals jest as good a chance in this world as the rich bugs' kids—that is, ef we do our part an' give 'em an eddycation."

"You have a wonderful grasp on the truth as I see it, Mr. Anderson. As a matter of fact, I believe these boys and girls attending the Peggy Ware School have an infinitely better chance in the race of life than the children of the rich. There is a great, fundamental, underlying reason for this, and some day I may put it into a book. In the meantime I will content myself by doing here what I think should be done in every school and every community in the land. We will let our light shine, and maybe its rays may guide others into the right way."

"Ef yore dad would help you, he could be a power, with all his book larnin'. 'Pears to me he's gettin' quarer every day. I heerd him mutterin' to hisself t'other day somethin' that sounded like 'victory or death.' I wonder what he meant?"

"He meant that his soul is fighting a great battle with unbelief, Mr. Anderson, and if his soul doesn't win the victory, he will die. I know his soul is going to triumph, otherwise I would not have the courage to endure the anguish of seeing him suffer. When the light does come, he will be a power, as you have well said."

"I don't know jest what light you're talkin' about, Miss Peggy, but ef it's the kind o' light that shines wherever you go, then I hope he'll find it soon, becace as it is whenever I see him, I says to myself, 'He's jest like a black cloud risin'.'"

When Peggy reached home after her day's work, she was met by Simon, breathless and in a greater state of excitement than she had ever seen him.

"Come to my cabin, quick, honey," he said; "some-thin' turrible has happened!"

Peggy's first thought was of her father, and she followed Simon, her heart filled with fear.

"He's thar on the cot," whispered Simon. "I jest this minit got heah, an' I'se so glad you come when you did."

One glance at the apparently lifeless man was sufficient to convince Peggy that it was not her father.

His face was covered with blood, which had dried except where it still trickled down in a tiny stream from a great, gaping wound on his head.

His raven black hair was one mass of tangled blood clots, now almost dried, showing that his wounds must have been received several hours previously. His breathing was scarcely perceptible, and his heart beats could hardly be discerned.

Simon had placed the kettle on the fire, and at Peggy's suggestion, he brought a pan of warm water, and she began to remove the blood from the man's face and hair. She cleansed the wound on his head, and at Simon's suggestion poured into it a lotion prepared by Simon from certain "yerbs" with which he was familiar.

"I allus keeps it on hand," he said, "becace chilluns lak Ralph an' Virginny is liable to cut dey foot or stub

dey toenail off des any time, an' dis is de bes' medicine evah poured in a wound."

Her task completed, Peggy sat down by the cot and took the stranger's hand in hers. He stirred uneasily, and she felt a slight pressure on her hand, but there was no other sign of consciousness.

His was the most handsome face Peggy had ever seen. It showed culture and refinement, and the head and features bespoke the man of genius. His hands were those of an artist. There was an indefinable something about his personality that thrilled her with a feeling quite new to her. The touch of his hand sent the blood surging through her veins on a mad gallop, causing her to blush for shame.

A great pity filled her soul, and she asked Simon if he thought they should communicate with Mr. Anderson, and get him to send for a doctor.

"It's twenty miles to de neares' doctah," said Simon, "an' he couldn't do no good aftah he got heah. I'se seen lots ob dem lak dis in de army wid a lick on de haid. He'll come out ob it in a few hours ef we let him be quiet an' gib him a little stimulant. Ef it'd been a niggah hit on de haid lak dat it wouldn't nevah have fazed him, but a white gemmen's skull ain't as thick as a niggah's."

"Tell me what you know about him, Simon. Where did you find him, who is he, and how did he get hurt?"

"I kin only tell you whare I find him, but as to de res' you knowse as much as I does. I wus comin' back frum de rivah in de wagon an' one ob de tires run off an' I wus out in de thicket on de side ob de road cuttin' some hickry withes to tie de tire on wid, when I heered somethin' lak a man groanin'. I folloed de soun' until I come to a big heap ob leabes wid bresh piled on top. I stopped an' den I heered

de groanin' agin, an' it wus right down undah de bresh heap. I frowed it off, an' rake de leabes away, an' dar lay de pore man. I picked him up an' toted him to de wagon, an' des got heah and put him on de cot when I see you comin' frum school."

"Who do you suppose committed the dastardly deed, Simon, and what could have been the motive?" asked Peggy.

"Well, ef I wus sposin', I'd spose it wus some of dese wild cat fellahs dat thought he was a revenoo, as dey call 'em, an' dey killed him, as dey believed, an' buried him undah de leabes an' bresh, aimin' to take him to de Tennessee rivah an' throw him in when night come."

Peggy shuddered at the thought of the terrible fate from which Simon had rescued the stranger. Fervently she asked God that he might recover. Her very soul was calling him back to life.

"Bettah go to yore supper, chile. I'll watch him while youse gone."

Peggy attempted to withdraw her hand, but the man gripped it convulsively, and his lips moved as if he were trying to speak.

"He doesn't want me to go, Simon, and if you'll bring my supper I'll hold his hand until he is willing for me to go, if it's all night."

The man's grip relaxed, and again his lips moved, but there was no sound, not even a whisper.

After Peggy had eaten the food brought her by Simon, never releasing the stranger's hand in the meantime, her father came to the cabin and took his seat without speaking.

Ralph and Virginia came and peeped in, their eyes wide with wonder and awe. Peggy kissed them good-

night, promising to tell them about the wounded man in the morning.

When they had gone, she told her father the man's history as related to her by Simon.

"One of those revenue officers who made a mistake in coming alone to Bucks Pocket," her father commented.

"No, father, he is not a revenue officer. I don't know who he is or what his mission, but I am sure it has nothing to do with the Internal Revenue Service. Something tells me that he is a great soul, and was coming here for a purpose."

"I wish I had your faith, Peggy, but I have none in anybody or anything. I trust you, but I think you are deluded, and some day you will awake as I have done to find that all your beautiful visions and dreams are but castles in the air to be toppled over by the first wind that blows."

"Oh, my father, if you could only realize that my vision is the most real thing in the universe to me, and that it is 'being fulfilled every day.' If your eyes were open and you could see what I do, you would shout for very joy."

"All is dark with me, my child. There is not one ray of light, and I have lost hope. I feel that my very presence is a curse, and I long to lay it all down—to forget—and to be no more."

"Ah, but you cannot forget, father; when you pass on your memory will be quickened a thousand fold and regret for your mistakes will be intensified.

"You have now arrived where the soul in its struggle for the mastery always reaches just before the light comes. The Bible is full of cases like yours. All great literature tells of this travail of the soul. It is the quest for God."

Her father was silent, and Peggy waited. The silence grew into minutes, interrupted only by the breathing of the man on the cot. Finally Peggy spoke:

"Father, will you do me a very great favor?" she said, looking at him with pained face and pleading eyes.

He hesitated, shifting uneasily in his chair, his eyes afraid to meet hers.

"What is it, daughter," he finally said.

"I want you to read a certain passage from your Bible that Simon has been keeping for you until you needed it."

At the word 'Bible,' the hard, bitter look returned to his face. "I don't believe in the Bible," he said harshly.

"It's the only request I have made of you in months, father," the voice of his child pleaded. "Surely you won't deny me."

Simon had brought the Bible, and held it out toward the man he had loved and followed through all his vicissitudes. Wilbur Ware took it from Simon's hand reluctantly, as if still undecided.

"Turn to the story of Jacob's wrestle with the angel, father. I think it is so wonderful, and I want to hear you read it again."

Mechanically he turned the leaves of the book until he came to the passage which was familiar to him in the old days. In a hard, unsympathetic voice he began:

"And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him.

"And he said, let me go for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said, What is thy name? And he said, 'Jacob.'

And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

"And Jacob asked him, and said, 'Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, for I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved.

"And as he passed over Peniel, the sun rose upon him."

As the reading proceeded, his voice softened, and a look of eager longing took the place of bitterness and despair. The Bible slipped from his hand and fell to the floor. He passed his hand over his eyes as though he were brushing away something that clouded his vision.

Slowly he arose, crossed over to Peggy, buried his face in her golden hair, saying gently:

"God bless you, my child."

"He is waiting to bless you, father, just as he did Jacob. You are in the dark now. That is where self—the animal man always makes his last stand. When your soul triumphs, you will see God face to face, and the sun will rise upon you."

Without making any reply, the gaunt form of the storm-tossed ex-preacher moved noiselessly toward the cabin door, and was lost in the darkness.

The hours of the night crept slowly by. Simon nodded in the corner, awaking occasionally to replenish the fire with sticks of wood that he had piled on the hearth.

Peggy held the man's hand, always to feel that convulsive, compelling grip if she attempted to withdraw hers. Toward morning his breathing became deeper, and more regular. Finally Peggy dozed for a moment, but in that moment she lived through many experiences.

Her old vision came back to her, and this time a man had come to play a big part in her life and work. She saw his face, and it was the face of the stranger. They were happy in their work, and a new world had come to Bucks Pocket. The Elysian fields of Paradise beckoned, and she and the man entered. The gates were about to close, shutting them in to an eternity of happiness, when a woman of wondrous beauty appeared and beckoned to the man. He turned toward her, and seemed to be hypnotized.

"I must leave you, darling," he said, "but we'll meet again in a thousand years."

He was gone—and the beautiful woman who had enticed him away from Paradise was Ruth Anderson.

Heart-broken, Peggy rushed from the fields of Paradise, awakening with a start to find her tears falling on the man's face.

The first rays of the sun were shining through the cracks in Simon's cabin. The man on the cot stirred, opened his eyes for a moment, muttering: "I dreamed I was being conducted to heaven by an angel."

"You are better now," Peggy said, placing her hand on his forehead. "I must leave you for a little while, but Simon will care for you, just as faithfully as I could. Do you understand?"

For answer, the dark eyes opened once more, and the lips answered "Yes."

"I must get the cob-webs out of my brain," said

Peggy, as she emerged into the morning sunlight. "That foolish dream has upset me, and I am trembling like a leaf. A walk up to Mr. Anderson's will set me right. I will arrange to have the stranger properly cared for, get my breakfast, go to my school, and get my feet back on solid ground."

CHAPTER NINE

THE WILD CATTER SURRENDERS

LEAVING the sleeping man in Simon's care, feeling that he had safely passed the crisis, Peggy hurried to the house of Cliff Anderson.

She was learning more and more to rely on this sturdy, forceful man. Beneath his rough exterior and brusque speech, she knew there beat a heart as tender as a woman's and genuine as gold. So when confronted by some new dilemma, she often went to him, and his native good sense usually pointed out the proper solution.

Cliff Anderson was not at home, and his wife was plainly embarrassed when Peggy said she wanted to see him about a matter of great importance.

"I am lookin' fer him every minit," she said. "He allus gits here fer breakfast."

Innocently, Peggy inquired, "Where did he go, Mrs. Anderson?"

"I jest can't tell you, Peggy. Cliff would be as mad as old Dan Tucker ef I did," said his wife.

"Come with me, Peggy," said Ruth, "and we will go and meet him. I know the trail he will travel."

"Don't go too fur, Ruth," warned her mother. "You know it ain't safe."

Arm in arm the girls left the house, and were soon on a winding trail that led into the depths of the forest. After they had gone a short distance, Ruth said:

"Peggy, I am goin' to tell you somethin'. Pap

makes wild-cat whiskey, and this trail leads to his still. I dasn't take you there, for he would rather die than have you know what he is doin'. Since you came to the Pocket, I been wantin' him to quit worser than anything in the world, but he won't listen to me an' ma. He jest says: 'You tend to yore business, an' I'll tend to mine.'

"Now ef you'll go up thare by yoself, an' ketch him, I believe he'll be so ashamed that he'll quit."

Impulsively, Peggy said: "I'll go by myself. I know he will be terribly angry, but it may be my opportunity." And Peggy, who was always doing what for other people would be the unusual, set out on the path, and Ruth returned to the house.

In a little while the trail began to climb up toward the rock wall of the Pocket, following a small stream that flowed swiftly over its stony bottom. The sun had not yet penetrated this spot, though shining on the valley below.

It was now early Spring, and the maple trees were clothed with green leaves, while the buds were bursting on the other timber. The dogwood bushes were in bloom, and also the redbuds, while the ground was carpeted with sweet williams, daisies and violets. A hundred different varieties of birds joined in one grand chorus of praise, led by an occasional mocking bird perched upon the highest tree tops. The blue of the sky completed the glorious spring morning which is nowhere more beautiful than in this mountain region.

Peggy was greatly excited. She was about to face a new experience. Her pulse thrilled, and her heart thumped violently.

Her sensations of the previous night still lingered with her. They had left her laboring under emotions that were wholly new to her, and she had not yet been

able to analyze her feelings. She had intended to tell Ruth about the stranger, and of her watch by his side through the long night, but she could not bring herself to mention it. When she thought that Ruth might soon be holding his hand as she had done, while she was engrossed in her work of teaching, a pain clutched her heart, and she stopped, steadied herself, took a deep draught of the ozone-laden mountain air, laughed lightly, saying to herself:

"That foolish dream upset me. I am silly to think of it again."

Now the trail crawled between two giant boulders that jutted out from the walls that rose abruptly on the east side of the Pocket, and she found herself inside a little cove, entirely surrounded by rocky walls, the only opening being by way of the trail she was traveling. Through this opening flowed the tiny stream that she had been following.

The undergrowth was dense in the cove, and but for the trail she could not have made her way. The path wound around a point of rocks, and she stopped, fascinated, for there just a few feet below her, at the fountain head of the little stream, in full operation was a big distillery, and Cliff Anderson, in shirt sleeves, his muscular arms bare, was working like a Trojan. For a moment she hesitated, started to turn back, then summoning all her courage, she said:

"Good morning," Mr. Anderson.

Without looking to see his intruder, he sprang for his rifle lying near at hand, brought it to a level with his shoulders, and was drawing a bead on Peggy, saying hoarsely: "Hands up!" before she could utter a sound, so swift had been his action.

"All right, Mr. Anderson. Up they go," and suit-

ing her action to her words, she raised her hands, and began to laugh in a frightened sort of way.

Realizing for the first time that it was Peggy, the big Wild Catter collapsed. He dropped his gun, his knees trembled, his frame shook, his heart pounded, and, yielding to a feeling of sudden faintness, he sat down on a stone, the big drops of perspiration standing on his forehead.

"Fur God's sake, what brings you here, Miss Peggy? I shore come nigh shootin' you."

Regaining her composure, and again feeling the thrill of being in the lair of the King of Wild Catters, Peggy said lightly, and in a matter-of-fact way:

"I have been thinking of giving my boys a course in whiskey-making, and decided to run up this morning and take my first lesson. Turn about is fair play, you know, Mr. Anderson. I have been imparting my knowledge to you, and now you must swap work by teaching me."

"This ain't no knowledge, Miss Peggy, that ought to be taught, an' you shorely don't mean what you say?"

"I am perfectly sincere, Mr. Anderson. I want to learn how it is done. I am not afraid to investigate anything, and if I don't like it after learning about it, I can leave it alone."

"Wall, I know you won't like this business, Miss Peggy, so I don't advise you to try to larn it."

"If it is good enough for you to follow, Mr. Anderson, it must be all right," insisted Peggy, secretly amused at the suffering of Anderson.

"You allus have yore way, an' I've allus found yore way right, so here goes." So saying, he proceeded to explain to her the whole process of making whiskey,

beginning with the "mash" and ending with the distilled essence of the corn.

Peggy was all enthusiasm as he told her of the workings of his still, which he said was the most complete one in a hundred miles.

He explained that his helpers had gone to breakfast and that as soon as they returned, he would go to his breakfast that Molly would have waiting for him.

After Peggy's "lesson" was finished, she said: "Let's sit down, Mr. Anderson, and talk a little. I am in trouble, and want you to help me."

At the mention of trouble, the big man was all attention. "Ef you're in trouble, Miss Peggy, an' I kin help you, all you has to do is call on me."

Peggy proceeded to tell him the story of the stranger whom Simon had found, left for dead in the woods, and now in Simon's cabin. She also told him of her vigil through the night.

Anderson said: "You ought to have sent fer me."

"I came this morning for I need you. We have no suitable place for him as you know, and no one to look after him, as I am busy all day with my school. I thought perhaps you would take him to your house."

"I recon' he's one of them nosin' revenoo officers an' some of the boys tried to make a finish of him, but under the sarcumstances they ain't nothing else to do, an' I'll git some of the men to help me an' we'll bring him up to my house, an' Molly an' Ruth kin take kere of him ontill he gits well."

At the thought of Ruth "taking keer" of the stranger, Peggy winced, and again chided herself for being so foolish. Changing the subject, Peggy said:

"Mr. Anderson, why do you make whiskey in violation of the law? Is it because you need the money so badly?"

He scratched his head, and pondered before answering. "Wall, I'll be durned ef I know ezactly. No, I don't need the money. There is lots of things I kin do to make money that'll beat this. I spose it's the excitement—the resk I run. Besides I jest like to beat them revenoo fellers."

"Do you drink the whiskey, yourself, Mr. Anderson?" she said sweetly.

"Law, no, Miss Peggy, I never tasted a drap in my life. I make it fer fools to drink."

"Then you think no one but a fool would drink the stuff, do you?"

"Most pintedly I do. Ef he ain't a fool afore he drinks it, he will be when he gits about a pint under his belt."

"Well, then," persisted Peggy, "if you don't need the money, don't drink it yourself, and know that it makes a fool of those who do drink it, will you please tell me why you make it?"

A long pause, and more head scratching.

"Jest becuse I am a durned, hard-headed old fool, an' never had nobody to talk to me before like you have."

"And when are you going to quit, Mr. Anderson?" Her eyes searched his soul, and he felt it. He had vaguely foreseen the time when he must meet this issue.

Nothing could be hidden from those eyes, and he dare not try to deceive her even in his thoughts, for he felt that she read his innermost thoughts as readily as she could understand his words.

"This is kinder sudden, Miss Peggy, but you're allus doin' things suddin. While someone else would be thinkiin' you'd go an' do it. That's sorter my style

too. So I'll answer yore question by sayin' 'I done quit'."

Without another word, he seized an axe and began chopping the worm of the big still to pieces. When he had finished, he turned out all the slop, burst the heads from the barrels of whiskey, allowing it to flow into the spring branch.

When his helpers returned from breakfast, the wreck was complete. They were amazed, and their first thought was that the revenoos had raided them. When Anderson said: "I done it, boys," they were quite sure that the "Captain" had lost his mind.

"Pile everything together, put a lot o' pine knots on top, an' burn her up. I don't want nuthin' left. Tomorrow I'll give you a decent job," said Anderson. "I'm gwine to Chattanooga on the next boat an' buy a saw mill, an' cut up this timber on my land, an' you kin grind your axes an' sharpen yore saws an' go to cuttin' logs in the mornin'.

"When you git through here, come down an' I'll show you whare I am gwine to set the mill, an' you kin clear it off an' have the site ready by the time I git back."

Too astonished to reply, the men began to carry out his instructions, as he and Peggy disappeared down the trail.

On the way to the house, Peggy asked him what he was going to do with his lumber.

"I ain't thought much about that," said Anderson. "I lowed mebbe you could use some of it."

"My dreams are coming true; my dreams are coming true!" exclaimed Peggy rapturously.

"What dreams you talkin' about, Miss Peggy? You know I don't take much stock in dreams or religion."

Hastily, enthusiastically, she sketched her plans.

His interest grew as she talked, and when she reached some point that appealed to him with unusual force, he would say: "Let's stop a minit. I can't think when I'm walkin'."

They were a long time reaching Anderson's home, and he was almost as full of Peggy's plans as she herself. She had told him briefly of her life among the mountain boys and girls, and of her interest in and love for them. She had seen their poverty, their ignorance, and lack of opportunity. She had always wanted to help them in some way to get an education.

She told him that there was no better blood in the world than flowed in the veins of these boys and girls of the mountains of the South. She said their mentality was of the best, and all they lacked was opportunity.

She told him of her dream, when the spirit of her mother appeared to her and showed her Bucks Pocket. She said she recognized it when she first saw it, and that everything up to the present had taken place just as she dreamed.

Growing in enthusiasm, she sketched a school where there would be hundreds of boys and girls gathered in from this mountain region—boys and girls whose parents were poor, or who had no parents, could find a home and at the same time be educated. Not the ordinary education of "book larnin'," but taught all that was good in books and useful trades besides. Along with this education of the head and hand, she also proposed as the most important thing to develop their souls. Not in a narrow sectarian way, but in the broad principles of scientific Christianity and right living.

All this teaching was to be free, or at such a nominal cost that the poorest would not be debarred. In

no case would any boy or girl be turned away for lack of funds.

Anderson was fascinated. In all his life he had never thought of anything half so big. He could see Bucks Pocket the most famous spot in the State, and the Peggy Ware School the most unique institution in the land. He caught the fire of Peggy's enthusiasm and pledged his support.

Stopping suddenly as if he had run up against a stone wall, he said: "Hole on a minit, Miss Peggy, whare you gwine to git all the money to do it with?"

"I have thought about that, too, Mr. Anderson, and asked my mother that question in my dreams, and she said: 'Have faith.' You know, Jesus said if we have faith as a grain of mustard seed, we can remove mountains, and I believe it, Mr. Anderson, believe it with all my soul."

"Wall, I recon' he know'd what he wus talkin' er-bout, an' I know you dō, an' I got faith in you ef I ain't in nobody else; an' I am jest goin' to foller you blind, trustin' 'to you an' the Lord."

They had reached the house, where Mrs. Anderson was scolding about the biscuits getting cold. She was greatly surprised when she saw Peggy with her husband, for Ruth had not informed her mother that she had directed Peggy to her father's still.

"For the lan's sake," she exclaimed, "Whare did you all git together?"

"She come to the still an' captured me," said Anderson, "an' then I destroyed the durned thing so she won't have no evidence agin me when she takes me to court." The big man chuckled, and there was a new light in his eyes, and a new expression on his face.

Ruth could hardly believe her ears, but being reassured by a swift glance at Peggy, she threw her arms

around her father's neck, hid her face on his shoulder, and said between her sobs: "Oh, daddy, I'm so glad!"

Looking earnestly into the clear, fearless eye of her spouse, his wife said: "Cliff, you shore look lak you got religion."

"Ef I thought I had, I'd send fer the doctor shore," said Anderson.

Peggy remained to breakfast, and it was the most joyous meal ever eaten in the Anderson home. After it was finished, Peggy explained to Mrs. Anderson and Ruth the presence of the wounded stranger in Simon's cabin, and that Mr. Anderson had agreed to give him shelter until he was able to travel.

Ruth and her mother were in hearty accord with the suggestion, and while Anderson and some men that he had summoned prepared a litter, Ruth and her mother put the spare room in order.

Peggy accompanied the men to Simon's cabin, where they found that Simon had induced the stranger to drink some coffee, but he was still but half conscious.

Placing him gently on the litter, well wrapped in blankets, four men bore him to Anderson's home, where the big feather bed with snow white sheets was in readiness.

Peggy insisted on accompanying the men, walking beside the stretcher, holding the stranger's hand as she had done through the long night, feeling again that indefinable thrill that she feared, yet loved.

When he had been made as comfortable as possible, Peggy declared that she would be late at school and must go.

"You better stay home today an 'take keer of the stranger, Ruth," said her mother, "case I got to cook dinner fer the men," and Ruth, already more interested

in the mysterious man than she had ever been in anyone in her life, eagerly consented.

"You'll miss your lessons, Ruth," weakly suggested Peggy, and instantly she was ashamed of herself.

"Oh, I'll have plenty of time for school after he's better," and Ruth took the sick man's hand in hers, while she gently stroked it.

Peggy felt a lump rise in her throat, her face flushed crimson, her loss of sleep and foolish dream had completely upset her, and she felt an unreasoning anger in her heart toward Ruth.

Ah, Peggy, where are all your visions and dreams, your plans for the mountain boys and girls? What mist is it that has shut out this beautiful vision? What thing is it that clutches at your heart, just as though you never had a vision or dream? Why do you linger on the threshold as your pupils eagerly await your coming and wonder why you are late?

"I must go now. Good-bye, Ruth," and Peggy was gone.

Without taking her eyes from the man's face, Ruth said in an absent-minded sort of way: "Good-bye, Peggy."

When Peggy reached the school house, she had regained her composure. She was quite sure now that it was the unusual experiences through which she had been passing, and her nerves were a little unstrung. Yes, and the dream about the man—the foolish dream.

When she told her pupils "good morning," there was no trace of her momentary weakness, and her smile and presence brought heaven into the room.

CHAPTER TEN

A MAN WITHOUT A NAME

THE days moved swiftly for Peggy Ware, so filled was every hour with work.

Every morning she inquired about the stranger, and she was glad when told of his gradual improvement. She had not seen him since the morning after her all night's vigil, although she had a constant desire to see him again. Why she hesitated to go to the Anderson home and ask about him, and, of course, see him, she did not know. Perhaps it was the thought of Ruth ministering to him after he returned to full consciousness, and the feeling that he would not remember or recognize her.

She tried to silence her desires by saying that he was well cared for, and that these boys and girls, as well as the gray-haired men and women needed all her time and efforts.

Cliff Anderson's sawmill had arrived, and the forest was ringing all day with the echo of the axes of the choppers, while the shrill whistle from the engine sent a new thrill to Bucks Pocket.

Soon great stacks of lumber were piled on the mill yard, and Anderson began to discuss with Peggy the next step in the plan of development.

One day after the close of the lesson for the older folks, he lingered for a talk with her. He was unusually serious, and his first words were: "I got a big

idy, I b'lieve, Miss Peggy, an' I want to see whut you think about it.

"You know I own a whole pancel of fine timber land here in the Pocket, and when the timber is cut off, it is as good farmin' land as a crow ever flew over. I set my saw mill in the center of one tract that has about a thousand acres, an' I jest got a hunch to deed it, saw mill an' all, to the Peggy Ware School an' then be yore boss of the saw mill ef you'll have me."

"Oh, Mr. Anderson, you are the most wonderful man I ever knew," warmly exclaimed Peggy. "You are one of God's noblemen, and I can't find words to thank you. Of course, you know that I could not accept this for myself, and if you insist on making the gift we will incorporate the Peggy Ware School, and yours will be the first donation, and you shall be the first Chairman of the Board of Trustees, and to you, more than anyone, will be due the credit for the success that I know is in store for us."

"Don't talk about me gittin' credit, Miss Peggy. I don't deserve it. I am tryin' to pay debts, not git any more credit. I got more credit now than I could pay ef I lived to be a hundred. Why I paid fer all this land with money I got fer wild cat licker, an' it don't raley belong to me. I been lyin' awake at nights thinkin' about it, and thinkin' lots of things that I wouldn't want even God to know, an' I been wondrin ef they wus any way I could square accounts; an' when you told me about edycatin' these boys an' gals, I said to myself: 'Mebbe I kin help pay one of my debts this way.'"

"Let's go to the county seat tomorrow—it's Saturday, you know, and there won't be no school, an' fix up yore Peggy Ware School papers, an' Molly an' me will make the deed all while we are thare."

So bright and early on the following Saturday morning, Cliff Anderson, Peggy and Molly went to the county seat in Anderson's new buggy, which he had bought at the time he purchased the saw mill.

When they appeared at the Court House, there was quite a commotion among the officials. The loafers eyed Anderson's new buggy and harness, and Peggy created a sensation. Vague rumors had been filtering in by grape vine that great things were happening in Bucks Pocket, but no one had been out to investigate; and when the King of the Wild Catters drove into town, accompanied by his wife and a young woman of striking appearance and unusual personality, all the men who were not busy, and this included almost every one, were reminded that they had urgent business at the Probate Judge's office.

Over in an alcove corner, the Judge sat at his desk preparing the papers, while Anderson, Peggy, and Molly waited.

The work, completed, the Judge congratulated Anderson warmly on the big thing that he had done.

"It ain't nothin', Jedge," he said. "It's jest a starter. We turned over a new leaf out in Bucks Pocket, an' I want you to come out an' see the Peggy Ware School about a year frum now."

"By turning over a new leaf, I suppose you mean that you have gotten religion, Cliff," said the Judge. "I am so glad to hear it, for that is all you ever needed."

"Say, Jedge, I've allus been yore friend an' voted fer you, but ef you ever 'cuse me of havin' religion agin, I'll be mad as a wet hen. Why! I'd ruther have the seven-year itch than to ketch religion.

"I know a preacher that had it, an' he said God sowed seed an' the devil sowed seed, an' ef the devil sowed me, I wus bound to go to Hell, an' ef God

sowed me I'd go to Heaven ef I wus as mean as the devil.

"Then I knowed another preacher—that is, he had been one—an' he said he had found out they warn't no God, an' that when a man died he wus no more'n a dead ox.

"An' I knowed two more fellers that had religion—lots of it. They would shout at camp meetin' so you could hear 'em a mile. They wus preachers, too. They both had little pecker-wood churches out on the mountain, an' not more'n two dozen folks to hear 'em preach. Well, they got up a jint discussion about baptism, an' open an' close communion, an' a lot more Tommy-rot, an' they got het up until they pulled off their coats an' fit like cats an' dogs, and their members got into the scrap—men an' women, too—an' it wus the biggest hair-pullin' that ever took place on Sand Mountain. In about a week one of the churches burned down, an' in a few days the other went the same way.

"The preachers said it wus Providence, but I think it wus religion that done it."

A crowd had collected as Anderson delivered himself of these sentiments, and there was much amusement.

One of the leading lawyers said banteringly: "Anderson, you are getting to be quite a stump speaker. You ought to make the race against me for the Legislature, and we will have joint discussions, and give the people lots of fun."

"The trouble is that you are an atheist, and if you were elected you could not qualify, because you don't believe in God." The lawyer eyed the crowd for its approval, and a good-natured titter ran round the room.

"Your'e a—a" and Anderson's face was white, his

eyes blazing. "You're mistaken," he said at last, regaining his composure. "I believe in God with all my heart, but not in this religion that makes you mean, sick, miserable, goin' round with long faces, tryin' to look sanctimonious as ef you could fool God! No, I don't want religion. I want Christianity lak Miss Peggy here got.

"I ain't got it, not by a jug-full, but I'm gwine to have it or die tryin', an' ef you all will come out to Bucks Pocket, you will see the difference between religion an' Christianity."

Peggy was greatly embarrassed at this reference to her, and longed to get away from the curious crowd, while Mrs. Anderson kept nudging her husband, finally saying, "Come on, Cliff, an' let's go."

"All right, Molly, I had to git it out of my system, an' I want to say to Mr. Fuller that I may make up my mind to run agin him fer the Legislature, an' ef I do when we git through, he'll know he's been runnin' some."

"Hurrah for Anderson!" a half dozen shouted, and amidst much merriment, he, Molly and Peggy started for Bucks Pocket.

On the homeward road, Peggy's imagination flew on the wings of the wind. So rapidly was her vision materializing that it startled her. Mentally addressing herself, she would say:

"Peggy Ware, who is doing all this? I know it's not you, for you are just an ordinary sort of girl."

And then something within seemed to say: "It is I, Peggy Ware—You are just "me." But I am the real Peggy, and I am using you for my instrument.

"And who is this "I," that you speak of?" she would again question mentally, and the answer would come back:

"I am spirit, and to know me is to know all truth."

As she talked of her plans, Anderson's imagination galloped along beside hers, and even Molly Anderson was not far behind. These two had caught the infection of Peggy's enthusiasm.

The road was good until it reached a point about three miles from Bucks Pocket. From there on it could hardly be called a road, and it was a slow, painful journey on account of its roughness. The buggy jolted, tilted, and threatened to upset from time to time.

"By George!" impatiently exclaimed Anderson, "I never knowed before how rough this road wus. Monday mornin' I'll put a crew of men on it an' we'll build the best road in the county clean down through the Pocket and on to the Tennessee River.

"This is the first buggy ever owned by anybody in Bucks Pocket, an' I reckon most of 'em never heerd of an automobile, much less seen one. But I got a feelin' that automobiles frum all over the country are comin' here, and I am gwine to git the road ready."

"I am so glad to hear you say this, Mr. Anderson. It inspires such confidence," exclaimed Peggy. "I had seen all this in my vision, but sometimes I get afraid, and don't like to tell you all I see. So when you propose doing what I have already seen, without a word from me, I just know that I am on the right track.

"It's queer how we are afraid to have faith, don't you think so?" asked Peggy. No one answered, for it was too deep a problem for Cliff Anderson and Molly. Their minds were dwelling nearer the earth.

Suddenly Mrs. Anderson said: "You an' Cliff been doin' all the talkin' an' I wonder ef I mout butt in?"

"You are not 'buttin' in,' dear. I love to hear

you talk, because you always say something practical," said Peggy.

"Wall, I wus thinkin' that Cliff is to be yore boss at the saw mill, buildin' roads and sich things, but I been thinkin' about who's gwine to do the cookin' fer all them boys an' gals that's comin' here next fall?"

"I don't know, Mrs. Anderson. I have been thinking that too, but I know God will send us someone at the proper time."

"Have you prayed fer one?" Molly Anderson asked eagerly.

"I have," replied Peggy. "And I have no doubt about it. I ask Him for everything I need, and he never fails me."

"I don't know whuther it's the Lord sendin' me or not, Peggy, but I'd like the job ef you think I'll do."

"Bless your heart, I'd rather have you than anyone in the world," said Peggy, as she kissed her until she was all smiles and tears.

"She's the best cook in the county, an' they'll come to the Peggy Ware School fer the grub ef nothin' else," proudly asserted Anderson.

"Did I hear you say the other day that you wanted to go back to yore old home in the Cumberland Mountains an' gether up a pancel of them boys' an' gals an' bring 'em down an' put 'em in school this fall?" queried Anderson.

"Oh, that is just one of my fancies. Some day I hope to do that, but not right away," answered Peggy.

"Wall, I jest been thinkin' what a fine trip it would be fer you, Molly an' me. I used to go to Chattanooga to peddle wild-cat whiskey, but I ain't been thare fer sixteen years.

"That's when you brought Ruth," began Mrs. Ander-

son, and then she stopped suddenly, frightened out of her wits as she looked at her husband's stern face.

"Yes," said Anderson, "the time I brought Ruth a big doll," and he laughed a dry, mechanical sort of laugh.

"That's jest like you, Cliff, allus takin' the words outen my mouth," said his wife, in an awkward sort of way.

It was some time before he continued, and when he did so, his voice was a little shaky as though he were making a great effort at self-control.

"I wus jest sayin' when Molly broke in on me, that I would like to go through Chattanooga in a big automobile—the three of us, stop at the Patten hotel, and then go to yore old home and go out in the mountains an' gether up yore boys an' gals, bring 'em all to Chattanooga, put our automobile on the boat an' all the kids, an' steam down the old Tennessee, and have her dock at Peggy Ware, fer that's what we are gwine to call our postoffice, an' the steam boat landin' will be named Peggy Ware, too, an' then we'll march 'em all up a fine 'cadamised road to the Peggy Ware School."

His enthusiasm had returned, his voice was again vibrant, and his eyes spoke eloquently.

"You are not joking, Mr. Anderson?" inquired Peggy, already sensing a fulfillment of his plan.

"I shore ain't. I got my heart set on it, an' we'll do it."

"My heart is with you," said Peggy, "and Jesus said, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there will I be in the midst also.' And I feel His presence."

"May I ax' one question?" queried Mrs. Anderson. Being assured that she might, she said: "Cliff,

where are you gwine to git the money to buy that automobile? Have you got any hid out that I don't know about?" she asked suspiciously.

"Of course not," he said laughingly. "We'll trust the Lord like Miss Peggy does."

After a pause, during which Molly seemed to be thinking profoundly, she said: "Cliff, I beleve you about that money, fer you never told me a lie in yore life."

The big man winced visibly, and his perturbation surprised Peggy, but his wife evidently did not observe it.

"Spose I told you that I wus the biggest liar in the county, what would you say?" asked Anderson.

"I'd say you'd told a whoppin' lie," replied his wife.

"But ef you found out that I shorely wus the biggest liar, what would you say?"

"I'd say that ef Cliff Anderson is the biggest liar in the county, Molly Anderson is the biggest fool in the county fer livin' with him forty years an' never findin' it out."

This sally brought forth a musical laugh from Peggy, and she was still laughing when the buggy stopped in front of Anderson's gate. "You must come in to supper, Peggy, an' Cliff can carry you home later."

Peggy protested, but it was of no use, for when Molly Anderson made up her mind to have you dine with her, there was no getting around it.

Peggy's heart was in her throat as she entered the house. She had a sinking sensation at the thought of the man she had not seen since that memorable night. She wondered if he remembered her at all.

Anderson had told her the day before that his guest was better, that he could sit up and walk around assisted by Ruth. His mind seemed to be all right, ex-

cept that he had forgotten his name, and the names of everyone he had ever known, as well as the places where he had lived or visited. He could not remember names now when told to him.

Peggy's interest had been keenly aroused by this startling information, and she had been racking her brain for a possible solution of the mystery.

"Come into the spare room, Peggy, while I bake some hot biscuits. My other supper's all cold," said Molly Anderson, leading the way.

Peggy experienced the greatest embarrassment of her life as she stood on the threshold.

The stranger was propped in an easy chair, reading to Ruth from one of Peggy's books, while Ruth's dark, beautiful face glowed with a light that Peggy had never seen before. So absorbed were they that they did not hear Peggy enter the open door, or note her presence until she said: "Good evening, Ruth."

At the sound of her voice, Ruth sprang to her feet, and in another instant, she was kissing Peggy, exclaiming, "Oh, I am so glad to see you. It seems like an age since you were here."

"If you had been so very anxious, you might have come to school," and Peggy laughed uneasily.

"I couldn't leave him," said Ruth, nodding her head toward the man, who had lain down his book. "Besides, he's been teachin' me, and I am **learning**, not 'larnin' " faster than I did at school."

"Quite natural," said Peggy, a twinge at her heart.

"Miss Peggy Ware, this is Mr. ——" and she hesitated, evidently embarrassed. The man came to her rescue.

"Mr. Man without a name," he said dryly. "I am pleased to know you, Miss—Miss——"

"Oh, just call me Miss Nobody," said Peggy, "and then we will stand on an equal footing."

"That's clever," he said, "and I am sure that we'll get along famously."

The man-without-a-name wanted to eat his supper at the table with the others, but Ruth protested that he was not able to go. So she carried his food to him while the others ate in the dining room.

After supper, the stranger was much interested in Peggy's work, and asked her many questions. As she outlined her plans, he would occasionally exclaim "wonderful," "marvelous."

In his excitement he forgot that he was still a convalescent, and began to walk nervously about the room, declining Ruth's proffered assistance, to this young lady's discomfiture, for she had taken complete possession of the man.

"I wonder," he exclaimed, "if there was ever such another case as mine. Here I am on the road to recovery, even impatient to be doing something, and I don't know how or where to begin. I don't know my name, where I formerly lived, or the names of anyone I ever knew. So far as I can tell my mind in all other respects is normal. I also know just what ails me—just what caused my present condition. I have diagnosed my case as though some one else was the patient. I also know how to cure my trouble, but it will take a long time.

"In the meantime I am lost. I am worse than the man without a country. I am a man without a country, a name, or a friend.

"Then, dear people, the—the—" and he stopped, embarrassed. "There is the trouble, you see. I can't remember names. I have to begin just where I started when I was a toddling, lisping infant, but I know how,

thanks to my professional training. What shall I do in the meantime?" he inquired piteously.

"I need another teacher. Won't you come and help me in my school, and perhaps I can help you." And Peggy could not hide the light in her eyes, or suppress the tremor in her voice. Ruth, watching keenly, knew that Peggy's interest was much deeper than she would have admitted to her own soul. However, Ruth had no fear, for it was a common saying in Bucks Pocket that "possession is nine 'pints' at law," and she had no intention of surrendering possession.

Eagerly the man agreed, saying: "I will be ready to begin Monday."

Again Ruth protested, but the man said: "The thought of becoming active, already makes me well, and the experiment I am going to make on my own brain, if successful, will be a marvelous step forward in mind building."

"I am intensely interested in mind building," said Peggy, "and I am anxious to have the benefit of your theories and knowledge."

"Gladly will I teach you all I know, and I hope that you will adopt it in your class rooms."

So it was settled that the man-without-a-name should be the first member of Peggy's faculty. She did not get the full force of the idea, until she had said good-night and was walking home in the moonlight. She insisted on going alone, much against the protests of Mrs. Anderson, while her husband said: "A woman allus has her way, an' you might as well let Miss Peggy alone when she makes up her mind, fer she's equal to two women when it comes to havin' her way."

Peggy was having her way, and it was a dim road, with great trees whose branches touched across it, leaving just an occasional opening for the moonlight.

But beyond the road, the trees, the moonlight, she saw a great gate swing ajar, and beyond, a landscape whose beauty ravished the eyes, and whose aroma intoxicated the senses, and by her side the interesting stranger—and then she stubbed her toe, came near falling, recovered herself, and exclaimed: "That foolish dream again."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE MIND BUILDER AT WORK

THE growth of Peggy's work filled her soul with a Divine flame that gave wings to her thoughts, and as fast as one step was taken, she was already planning for the next.

A feeling of guidance by some intelligence outside of her objective self had taken complete possession of her, and she felt that there was no height that she dare not undertake to climb.

Around her were limitless possibilities if she followed the lead of this something that had been speaking to her since her mother's death. She had learned that its voice could best be heard in the silence. So she had stated times when she sought quietude where she could hold communion with this friend and guide.

One of her shrines was the attic room where she still slept. Out of the window she could see the twinkling stars and silvery moon, and as she lay on her straw bed after a strenuous day's work, she listened for the still small voice; the same voice that Elijah heard after the storm had ceased, and the fierce conflagration had burned itself out. It is the same voice that has spoken to all who devoutly desire to hear it in all ages since man has been man.

Tonight as Peggy sought her room after the day's experience, she felt the need of this sacred communion. Here she was overwhelmed with the evidence that her work was being blessed. Already her school was incor-

porated, possessed a valuable tract of land, and her helpers were at hand as fast as she needed them. From a handful, her school had already grown beyond the capacity of the old "hard shell meeting house," and now threatened to tax the new building.

She was still the superintendent of the Sunday School, and the sole teacher as well as choir leader. She also acted as her own janitor, for the school house, getting there an hour before the arrival of the first pupil, so she could have half an hour for her period of communion with that other Self.

Besides this work, she cooked the meals for the family, did much of the household work, mended the clothes, darned the stockings, and made the few garments that were necessary for Ralph and Virginia.

And she was never tired. When the day's work was over, she was just as vital, just as radiant, and full of enthusiasm as in the early morning.

As she sought her bed her soul was full of thankfulness for all these things. Her attic room seemed filled by some wonderful presence. It permeated every fiber of her being. She felt it to her finger tips. It thrilled her until she vibrated in harmony with the mysterious presence that filled her room. These vibrations lengthened and the trees were responding. Looking toward the West, she could see bathed in the moonlight the great spurs of the Cumberland range, and they were answering to the vibrations she felt in her soul.

And as she listened to the great silence, a mocking bird, perched just outside her window, began to pour forth a perfect rhapsody of music and every note was vibrant with this same mysterious something that seemed to make her a part of the trees, the rocks, the mountain, and the notes of the bird. Swiftly now her

consciousness seemed to travel, as though freed from all fetters, until she felt the moon, the stars, the sky, the multitudinous worlds, the hosts of earth, and the hosts of heaven, yea, God Himself, were all united by this mysterious something that penetrated all space and filled the universe; and that she was an inseparable part of the whole. In this supreme moment, she knew that everything in the universe was at her command if necessary to her work, and with tears of joy bathing her cheeks, she fell asleep, saying: "I thank thee, Father, for revealing thyself to me."

* * * * *

Monday morning she was at the school house early as was her custom, but the stranger was already there waiting for her.

Ruth had guided him, insisting on helping him over the rough places, notwithstanding he insisted that he was well.

He said that he wanted to have a talk with Peggy before the opening of school, and Ruth proposed to sweep the house for Peggy, while she and the man discussed matters that Ruth felt were too deep for her comprehension.

"Before taking up my work of teaching, Miss——" and he hesitated.

"Miss Nobody," laughed Peggy. "Just call me that for the present."

"I think I had better explain briefly my condition and my theories, for you may not want to employ me after I have told you."

"In the first place, this lick on the head," pointing to the wound now almost healed, "evidently injured a certain portion of my brain which is the place where we store away our names and names of people and places. No other portion of my brain was injured,

and consequently I possess all my other faculties. Now, while I don't know who I am, I know that I am a brain specialist. I wrote a book on the brain and its functions, but I don't recall the title, but the principles are all perfectly familiar to me.

"I know that the brain is not the mind any more than the liver is. I know that the brain is not the man any more than the hand or foot is. I know that the entire body is not the man, and all this I have demonstrated in the laboratory.

"I know that the brain is simply the instrument which I use for expressing myself, and that I can make my own brains, so far as special functions or aptitudes are concerned, if only I have a will strong enough to undergo the prolonged exertion required.

"What and who this wonderful 'I' is that can make and use our brains for his expression, just how it is done is a matter of quite recent discovery, and yet when properly understood it is the most stupendous fact that has ever come to the consciousness of man.

"I believe that when fully understood, it will revolutionize our educational system, and increase the efficiency and goodness of the human family beyond our wildest dreams.

"If I can make these facts the basis for my work, I will gladly join you. I will take your pupils, old and young, and tell them in simple language just what is taking place while they are learning, just why it takes place, and precisely how to control, mold, build, and develop the brain, or any separate part of it along any lines desired. At the same time I will give them a practical demonstration in myself as I rebuild that area of my brain that was injured or destroyed by the blow, so that when the work is complete, I will have re-

gained my ability to remember names and places, and will regain my identity."

"I am fascinated with your ideas, and feel that you have been sent to do this special work," said Peggy. "I am in perfect accord with your views, and while I know there is much for me to learn along this line, I have some little insight into it, not from the standpoint of a trained physician, but—well, I can't just explain how it came to me," and she blushed in confusion. "I know that this sort of knowledge doesn't appeal to your scientific mind," she said, "but you must not laugh at me."

"I'll not laugh, I assure you, for there is a source of wisdom as far above our comprehension as the heavens are above the earth."

After thinking a moment, Peggy said: "If we can create or rebuild our brains, why can't we do the same thing with any part of our bodies?"

Before the man could reply, she said: "Who is it that does this brain-building?"

He laughed, but showed that his interest in this mountain "school marm" was already keen.

"You are proposing too many hard questions at once," he said. "As to your first question, I will confine myself to the brain, and you can apply my theory to the entire body if you think it will fit.

"As to **who** the builder is, I will not attempt an answer now. Perhaps we may discover him laboring in his workshop some day."

The pupils were arriving by this time; Ruth had put the school house in order, and when all were seated Peggy made a neat little speech, introducing the first member of her faculty, explaining that he had forgotten his name and that she had given him a new one, that of "Mr. Mind Builder," as it was to be

his work to tell them how to build and develop their minds. This created much amusement, and "Mr. Mind Builder" was spoken of in whispers by the curious pupils.

The "Mind Builder" gracefully acknowledged the introduction, accepted his new name, and in a few sentences had won the interest and confidence of every one present.

His first lesson was so important that I am going to quote it fully at the expense of having it called dry reading.

He drew a diagram on the blackboard, showing the functional areas on the surface of the left hemisphere of the brain of a right-handed person, after which he said:

"Our brains consist of two organs, exactly alike, called the right and left hemispheres. The brains of a man and a chimpanzee are identical, no one can tell the difference.

"The thing that differentiates man from other animals is his power of speech. No other creature has this power. But we are not born with the power of speech, we have to acquire it.

"The infant can cry, but so can the lamb; but the infant must be taught to talk. And after it learns to talk it must be taught to read, write, play music, and all the other things known to educated people.

"Before the infant begins to talk, it reaches forth its hand for the things it wants. If it uses its right hand it becomes right-handed, and the left hemisphere of the brain is the one where the mind makes its home. If it is left-handed, then the seat of mind development is in the right hemisphere.

"After you learn to talk, read, and do many other things by using the left brain, and it is injured so as

to become useless as a vehicle of expression, you can develop the same power in the right brain.

"I maintain that you can rebuild the brain after it is injured, as well as develop the uninjured hemisphere.

"Now what is it that develops the brain so the child learns to talk? The brain doesn't think any more than the hand or foot. The brain is not the mind, although it is the place where or through which the mind seems to function.

"Back of the brain is your real Self. He is invisible, but none the less real. If he were not there, you would be no more than a monkey, and could never learn to talk, or know anything that we call education.

"Your brain is the instrument on which this Real Self of yours plays the music. Your brain is the fiddle and your Self, the fiddler. If it were not for this fiddler, there would be no music if you had the finest fiddle in the world.

"This Self of yours can develop any part of your brain you desire him to. All you have to do is to will it with all your might, and he will do it with your help.

"There is a separate apartment in your brain for each kind of knowledge. There is one for reading, one for writing, one for arithmetic, and one for music, and this one is divided into two rooms, one where you read music, and another where you execute it.

"There is an apartment for each language that you may learn. So if you should learn a dozen different languages, there is a separate shelf in your brain where these are stored away.

"Now, here is an amazing fact. You can destroy that compartment of your brain where is stored the power to read music, and while you can no longer read music you can execute it. Or you can have the music-

playing room destroyed, and while you can read music perfectly, you cannot play a note. So with language. Suppose you learn English, Latin and Greek. These are all stored on separate shelves of your language library. If you destroy the English shelf, you can still speak Latin and Greek, but not a word of English. If you should have an injury that destroyed your Latin and Greek shelves, but left your English shelf intact, you could speak English, but would not remember one word of Latin and Greek.

"What happened when I received this injury to my head? It disarranged or destroyed the place in which I kept names. Now you don't suppose that the real I, the personality that first put the names in this particular portion of my brain has forgotten my name, do you, or that he has quit his job?

"My accident grounded the wire over which this self sent the names to my brain, and he is there ready to send them again as soon as another house is built to receive them.

"And this other fellow can build the house just as easily as he can place the names in it.

"These separate rooms in my brain are so tiny you can hardly see them, but they can never be filled. The more you put into one of these rooms, the more it will hold.

"Now, how am I going to induce this wonder-worker, this wizard, to rebuild my name-house and put the names back in it?

"There is but one way, and that is by desiring it. If I desire it with all my heart, this genius will get busy and renew my name house and fill it with names.

"Desire comes from the animal part of us. All animals have desires. The horse gets hungry and desires food. A man gets hungry and desires to know, and

this desire is flashed to man's other Self, and the knowledge comes back over the same wire.

"I desire with all the power within me that my name house be rebuilt, and I know that the work is now going on, and when it is complete, this miracle worker will begin to put names in it—and one of these days, I'll probably shout my name aloud for joy.

"Sometime you must read the wonderful story of the deaf and dumb and blind girl who learned to read and write. Her name is—you see, I can't remember."

"Helen Kellar," suggested Peggy, "and she was born within a hundred miles of this spot."

"I thank you for helping me out," he said, and continued:

"When nineteen months old she had an attack of cerebro-spinal meningitis, which left her totally blind and deaf, and dumb, also, for she had not yet learned to talk. Till her seventh year she was wholly dependent upon her senses of smell, taste, and touch, for all her information.

"At this period of her life, a teacher was employed for her, whose effort was to teach her language by tracing on the palm of her hand the letters spelling "doll" and "cake." Finally she could make them herself without knowing what they meant.

"A month from the beginning of her education, the awakening came. Her teacher had her hold a mug in her hand at a pump, and as the water filled the mug and ran on her hand the teacher traced the letters 'w-a-t-e-r' on the palm of her free hand. She dropped the mug, and a new light came into her face. She spelled water several times. This blind, deaf, and dumb girl suddenly understood that the symbol traced on her palm meant 'water.' She had learned a word.

"From that instant her personality was set free, like a prisoner liberated from a dark dungeon.

"The next morning she arose like a radiant fairy. She flitted from object to object, asking the name of everything, kissing her teacher for the first time in her gladness.

"How she learned to talk and has become one of the most accomplished women of our time is known to all the world. Some day we will read the story of her life together.

"It was her great, longing desire that reached her Soul, and the Soul that already knows, communicated its knowledge to her.

"We want to begin our education by doing just what this girl did. Send out strong desires for knowledge to our Souls, and they will tell us all things that we want to know."

He had finished, and was about to resume his seat.

"Mr. Mind Builder, where does my soul get its knowledge?" asked Peggy, her cheeks aflame and her eyes glowing with a desire to know more of this magic self which the speaker had boldly called the Soul.

"You want to get me into deep water where I might drown," he said, laughingly. "Perhaps, some day, you and I may solve that problem working together."

CHAPTER TWELVE

SEEKING REST AND FINDING NONE

SEVERAL weeks had elapsed since the "Mind Builder's" first lecture, but it still lingered with Peggy. He had given her a rational, tangible proof of what she had already felt in her soul, as well as laying down a scientific basis for proper mental development.

Already the result of his teaching could be seen. Her pupils displayed a new enthusiasm, for they had a definite understanding of what they were doing, and their advance in knowledge was nothing short of phenomenal. Their development of character was equally striking, for the same methods used for brain building will also build character.

Peggy had taken the position that these methods would apply to body building as well, and under her guidance the faces of the pupils were undergoing a gradual change, quite in keeping with their growth of character.

Noting this change, Cliff Anderson remarked to Peggy one day: "I declare, Miss Peggy, yore scholars are gittin' better lookin' every day. I believe the gals will be as purty as you by an' by, an' the boys as hansum as the 'Mind Builder.' Even these old folks don't look as mean as they did.

Peggy felt more and more the importance of communing with that invisible source of her strength, and at her suggestion, Anderson had built a house for her

out of hickory logs with the bark on, and at one end a chimney of rough cobblestones with an open fireplace, and Simon had provided wood to be used when the weather was cold. In this room there was an easy chair, a couch which Anderson had purchased somewhere without Peggy's knowledge, a small table, on which sat a vase for flowers, which Simon filled every morning. Beside the vase rested her mother's Bible, the only book in the room. Over the doorway there was written "Shrine of Silence," and no one ever crossed its threshold without Peggy's permission.

It was built in a secluded nook, and from one window Peggy could see a waterfall made by Sauty Creek, while from another she got a marvelous view of the winding Tennessee River, with its valley as fertile as that of the Nile.

When it was complete, and Peggy had taken possession, Cliff Anderson came to the door one day and said: "'Scuse me, Miss Peggy, fer comin' up here, but I got to talk to you. I jest can't hold in no longer."

She invited him in, but he said: "No, I ain't fit to come in, 'cause I know this is whare you talk to God, an' I ain't fitten to stand any place whare he has ever been. I'll jest stan' here on the outside, an' you set there whare I kin see you."

"I guess you wus the beginnin' of all my trouble, Miss Peggy, fer my conscience had never pestered me much 'til you come to Bucks Pocket. Sence you come, somethin's got holt of me, an' I have fit it an' fit it, an' it ain't no use. It's about to lick me."

"What is the trouble, Mr. Anderson?" asked Peggy, sympathetically.

"It's purty hard to say it," replied Anderson, "but

I recon the easiest way is to spit it right out. I am the biggest liar in the State!"

"Oh, Mr. Anderson, you don't mean it! I think you are the soul of truth and honor," exclaimed Peggy.

"That's whare I got you fooled. I got Molly fooled, too. She don't know it, en if she did I guess she'd quit me afore night an' git a divorce, an' I would be ruint without Molly," and the big man swallowed hard.

"I don't understand, Mr. Anderson; you'll have to explain."

"They ain't much explainin' to do. I told jest one big lie in my life to Molly, an' it wus that big an' black that I feel like a wurser liar than old man Ananias the preachers talk about.

"I didn't useter think much about it 'til you all come, an' then somethin' waked up in me, an' it's eatin' an' gnawin' day an' night, an' ef it do'nt stop, it's gwine to eat my heart out."

"Won't you tell me what it is? You know you can trust me," pleaded Peggy.

"Yes, I know I kin trust you, but I am afeard of Molly an' Ruth, an' you an' God an' everybody. You'll hate me, so'll Molly an' Ruth an' the whole world will, jest as I know God does."

"Oh, Mr. Anderson, God doesn't hate you; He loves you, no matter what you have done, and I see in you such a noble soul that no matter what your past may have been, I'd trust you with my life, and I am sure that Mrs. Anderson and Ruth will love you just the same after you tell them."

"That's whare you don't know Molly Anderson," he said. "She'd never, never fergive me."

"What I come to ax you is how to git away frum this thing that's eatin' me up. I thought when I quit makin' wildcat licker, deeded yore school all this land

and went to work as yore boss whare I could be nigh you an' hear you talk, I could git over it, but it gits woser an' woser."

"Mr. Anderson, there is but one course to pursue, and that is to make a clean confession of this wrong—lie as you call it—to the persons you have wronged," and Peggy looked at the suffering man earnestly.

He stood there, silent for a long time, his gaze fixed on Peggy's face, as though he were looking at her for the last time. Then turning slowly away, he said: "Thank you, Miss Peggy, but I'd ruther die than tell it."

When Peggy returned home, her father was not there. The children told her that he said he did not want supper, and that they were not to wait for him. Peggy's anxiety about her father had grown more acute of late. But for her unswerving faith, she could not have sustained this burden. When she most needed her father, he had utterly failed her. He was both a mill-stone about her neck and a mountain on her heart.

Day by day she had watched him as his face grew more pallid, his eyes more hopeless, and his once splendid physique but a pitiful reminder of what had been. She had talked to him, reasoned with him, prayed for him, wept for him in secret, and then met him with smiling countenance.

She knew there was but one remedy for the storm-tossed spirit of her father, seeking rest and finding none. Nor did she doubt that he would find the haven of rest, even if in death; but her soul longed to see him live, a new man, big, strong, forceful, helpful, his life a benediction to his children and the world. Ralph and Virginia needed him. She needed him, the world needed him, and most of all, he needed himself, that wonderful Self that was striving hard to reach him.

She remembered that she had somewhere read these lines:

"Oh, better self, art thou like me astray?

Seeking with all thy heart to find thy way to mine?"

And these words were echoing in her heart as she strolled down to Simon's cabin to inquire if he had seen her father.

The door was ajar, and hearing voices within, she hesitated about interrupting them.

The first sentence she heard gave her such a start that she was rooted to the spot, and without any thought of eaves-dropping, she lingered, listening to the conversation.

"Simon," said her father, "I have about made up my mind to put an end to my miserable existence, and I thought I'd tell you, because there is no other person I dare talk to about it."

"Pore chile, pore chile," the old darky crooned, "how sorry I is fer ye. How I wish I could take all yore load on my shoulders, case I'd know right whare to go to git rid of it."

"I know what you are going to say, Simon, but it's no use. I have gone all over that ground a thousand times, and I come back to the same conclusion.

"Of course, you can talk about God and His goodness, but he has never afflicted you as he has me. He first permitted my child to be stolen, and then He took my wife. And if there is a God, He is cruel."

"Massa Ware, I been wantin' to say somethin' to you fer a long time, but I ain't nevah said it. I knowse dat I ain't nuthin' but an ignant old nigger, an' I allus tries to keep my place, an' not be disrespec'ful, but dis time I'm gwine to do some plain talkin', no mattah what happens.

"In de fus place, de Lawd had nothin' to do with

takin' yore wife or baby. How any edycated white man kin accuse God of it gits by me. I knowed bettah dan dat all my life.

"In de secon' place, you ain't had no trouble. You don't know what real trouble is. Let me tell you what I calls trouble.

"When I wus a little boy over in Africa, de wicked slaver come along and stole me an' las' I evah see of my pa and ma they wus reachin' out dey hans tow'd me, screamin' an' cryin'.

"He brought me ovah to dis great lan' an' sole me to a man what use to git drunk an' beat me 'til de blood drip off my heels. Bimeby I fell in luv wid de fines' black gal in de country an' we got married, an' had two of de grandes' little pickaninnies you evah saw. One day my Massa sole my wife an' chilluns, an' dey wus carried way down to de cane fields of Louisiana, an' I ain't nevah seen or heerd ob 'em sense. An' de las' I see ob 'em, dey wus holdin' out dey hans fer me, cryin' an' callin' me.

"Den I carried my captain off de battlefield, an' he died in my ahms. He was like a fathah to me an' it most broke my heart. I had to go tell my Missus about it, an' when she sobbed and cried, an' say, 'Oh, Simon, I dis can't stan' it,' I felt lak I would die. An' den, when I stood by her chile an' see her dead, never to speak again, an' you suffrin' so, an' de chilluns weepin', I say: 'Shorely old Simon has suffered enough.'

"An' den, when we put her in de frozen groun' an' leabe her way up dar in de Cumberland mountains all by herself, I say, 'Bless God, her soul not in de grave.'

"An' den we cum heah, an' I see you sufferin' frum day to day, and dat deah chile of yorn doin' more dan any girl in de worl', needin' you so bad, an' my ole

heart des a-breakin' case I can't help her, I say 'Bless God, fer Miss Peggy; she's wuth all dis pore ole nigger evah suffered.'

"An' den I feel like shoutin' Glory to de Lawd, fer He has been so good to me, nevah hidin' His face frum me in de darkes' hours."

There' was a long silence, during which Simon seemed to be weighing his words. And then he went on: "In de las' place, you is selfish. Yes, you don't see nuthin' but yoreself, an' he gits in yore way so you can't see yore Peggy sufferin' an' yore little Ralph an' Virginny reachin' out dey tiny han's fer help, an' you can't see God. You think He is hidin' His face frum you, an' all de time it's yore own shader dat hides His face.

"He nevah hide His face frum any pore soul in dis worl' an' He nevah will. He allus dare wid His face shinin', en when you step frum behin' yore shader, you kin see Him, an' when you do, you'll say: 'What a pore blin' fool I been.'"

By the time Simon finished, Peggy heard her father sobbing, and she wanted to fly to him and put her arms around him, but on second thought she decided not to do so.

No other preacher, and no other sermon could have melted his heart. These were the first tears he had shed since her mother's death, and Peggy knew that the opening of the flood gates to his tears meant rest for his spirit. How long the way, how many dark valleys he must yet traverse, she did not know, but her soul told her that his face would be from this time on turned toward the light.

Noiselessly she slipped away, leaving her father still shaken by his emotion, while old Simon reverently exclaimed: "Thank God! Thank God!"

* * * * *

"He saved others, himself he cannot save." These mocking words of the Jews as Jesus hung on the cross, kept ringing in Peggy's ears as she gazed into the starry night. Her every thought had been given to others, without a care for herself. She slept on straw that others might rest on downy beds, and there was never a thought of self-sacrifice. She was the comforter and consoler of every one in distress in Bucks Pocket. Her shrine of Silence was becoming the Mecca for storm-tossed brains or aching hearts.

Was there a vicious tempered, unruly boy in school?

A few minutes in Peggy's shrine, and he came out subdued, the tears of penitence still trembling on his cheeks.

Was some rough mountaineer, smarting under some insult, intent on revenge?

A visit to the Silence room, and the anger and malice were all gone.

Did some poor, hard-working mother bend under her load? A few words, and a handclasp from Peggy, and she went away with a song in her heart.

Her vision took in all ignorant, distressed souls, and she often felt that she would gladly give her life if by so doing she could pour balm into every bleeding heart, and banish sin and disease from the world.

But tonight she could not save herself. Her bark was storm-tossed, and there was no beacon light to be seen. Reacting from the burdens and sorrows of others, she was overwhelmed by the cry of her human heart.

For a time the curtain was drawn between her and her vision. Her work faded, and there was nothing left on all her horizon save the figure of a man, handsome, brilliant, magnetic, to whom she felt drawn by an irresistible force that she had tried with all her

might to break. But tonight she felt helpless, and a sense of being swept out on the ocean by the pitiless tide, overwhelmed her.

Ruth loved the man with all her intense, passionate nature, and it was evident to Peggy that the man was being swept off his feet by her beauty.

Why must she at the threshold of her life's work feel this cruel thorn piercing her heart?

She cried out for someone to remove it, and heal the wound that it had made.

She tossed on her bed, the fever burned her brow, her spirit, like her body, was storm shaken. Unable to sleep, she arose, lit her lamp, and picking up her Bible, it opened at those words of Paul that have caused so much speculation:

"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to afflict me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

"For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

Now she knew that this thorn would never be plucked from her heart, but ever and always it was to be a reminder of her weakness, and God's strength. And the pain would sweeten her life, and the suffering make her one with all humanity.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE AWAKENING

THE hour had struck for Wilbur Ware—the hour of death or victory. There comes to every soul, sometime, somewhere, that supreme moment when the material man and super-natural man grapple for the final struggle. Saint Paul called the two contending forces the natural man and the spiritual man.

It is the darkest and most hopeless hour of a man's life. No other tragedy, not even death, is comparable to it. The sun is blotted out, the stars no longer twinkle in the blue, man's reason staggers like a wounded Cyclops, and the contest between these giant wrestlers takes place where no mortal eye can see and no friendly hand can help.

In his extremity, Paul was totally blind, and for three days and nights without food or drink. When his soul had triumphed, the scales fell from his eyes and he was filled with the Holy Ghost.

Elijah fled to a cave, and there in darkness fought his battle, and when the spiritual man triumphed, he heard the still, small voice.

Even Jesus was not exempt from this supreme struggle. We are told that His disciples slept as He wrestled with the man of flesh. As he prayed in Gethsemane His sweat, like great drops of blood, fell down to the ground. In His agony, He said: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." And then He cried out: "O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup

pass from me, nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." When He thus made the surrender of self, an angel appeared strengthening Him.

* * * * *

Wilbur Ware went out of Simon's cabin, groping in the dark. For him the light had failed. His reason had played him false, and now mocked him as he stumbled through the darkness. Beyond the outposts of reason there lay an uncharted desert, which he knew he must cross, if he ever should find peace. The material man said: "It is impossible! It is nothing but a mirage, and what you imagine as a Paradise beyond is empty nothingness. Turn back from this hallucination, and let me guide you to the life worth while."

He dared not turn back, for that way lay the hell of self, of which old Simon had told him. He had clung on to this self, not realizing that the devil he had preached about during the days of his ministry, was none other than the man of flesh that wages constant battle against the soul. He now understood the reality of this devil, and the certainty of the hell in which he had been tormented for months.

He fell on his face, and for the first time in his life really prayed. Heretofore his prayers had been words, words, in which he told God what he wanted. Now, like Christ, he said, "not my will, but thine be done." He nailed self to the cross, and as he did so, the devil was vanquished, and the fires of hell extinguished. Across the trackless desert there lay a friendly road, marked by the footprints of all great souls who had trod the same way. Faith burned a glorious beacon light, driving away the shadows of faulty reason. His soul had triumphed, and like Jacob at Peniel, he could

say, "I have seen God face to face, therefore I do not believe in Him, I **know** Him."

Wilbur Ware was born again, born of the spirit, conscious of his soul, and of his oneness with God, his Father.

Jesus said: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again." This new birth is just as essential today as when Jesus uttered these words. It opens the portals to salvation, and there is no other road. The Master said: "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."

The sun's first rays kissed the tallest peaks, as Wilbur Ware set his face homeward, a new light in his eyes, a new song in his soul, and a great love for all the world.

At the threshold of his home, Peggy embraced and kissed him rapturously, while Ralph and Virginia fairly danced for joy. They did not understand the miracle, but felt its presence.

Simon, unashamed of his tears of joy, exclaimed: "Lawd, I'se seen dy Salvation, an' I'se ready to go des any time you calls me!"

Wilbur Ware was indeed and in truth a new man. He told Peggy he was going with her to her school. He had never been there. In fact, he had shunned publicity and avoided meeting people. Those who happened to meet him were not drawn to him. They did not like him. Just why, they could not have told you.

When he entered the school room there was a mild sensation. Cliff Anderson, who still attended Peggy's class for illiterates, sat in open-mouthed astonishment.

The usual opening service concluded, Peggy said: "My father is going to talk to you this morning, and I

am so glad. You don't know how happy it makes me to have him with us." Her radiant face gave emphasis to her words.

Wilbur Ware's words electrified his hearers. Peggy's soul was thrilled. This was the supreme moment for which she had waited and prayed so long. Her father was now a giant, ready to help her carry forward her work. All felt a tremendous force emanating from this newly awakened man.

At the conclusion of his address, the older people gathered around to grasp his hand.

As Cliff Anderson did so, he said: "Ware, ef I wus a Christian, I'd say thank the Lord, but as I ain't nuthin' but a has-been old Wild Catter, I'll say thank Miss Peggy."

Holding the big, rough hand of Anderson firmly in his, looking steadily into his fearless gray eyes, Wilbur Ware said: "Mr. Anderson, you are a Christian, and don't know it."

Anderson, deeply touched, tried to hide his emotion. "It'll be a long road fer me, parson," he said, "fer I've been gwine the wrong way mos' all my life."

"I have never seen a more unselfish man, Mr. Anderson, and the surrender of self is the crucial test after all."

"That's whare you're badly fooled," exclaimed the old man, shaking his head slowly, "I ain't never made no self surrender, as you call it. I'm still a rebel, an' afore Cliff Anderson surrenders somethin' mo' pow'ful got to hit him than ever struck him yet."

Wilbur Ware was awake for the first time in his life. He had found that Something, that made him a human dynamo.

When we really crucify self, and allow the soul to

guide us, we come into touch with the source of all power and of all wisdom. The super-race will arrive when all men come to know and live this truth. It has been beclouded and befogged by man-made theology, and God has been placed upon a throne afar off, until many thinking men and women have been driven away from the churches, seeking for the truth elsewhere.

Henceforth Wilbur Ware was ready to preach the truth, calling men and women back to the church, and his soul was filled with a joy and peace that he had never dreamed was possible.

Throwing himself into the work, his bodily strength returned, and he never tired. His enthusiasm was contagious, and all of Bucks Pocket responded as it had already done to Peggy's vision.

Plans were drawn for substantial school buildings, dormitories, and workshops, and a community church. The three-room log school house was to forever stand and be incorporated into the larger plans. The buildings were to be constructed in units, so they could be added to as the work grew.

When the first unit of the school building was complete, it was dedicated by appropriate ceremonies. A large flag was unfurled above it, there to float in the breeze, an earnest that the Peggy Ware school stood for Americanism.

When this work was complete, Wilbur Ware planned to make of the church a community center for all gatherings and entertainments as might be for the welfare of the community.

A church was organized, without creed, dogma, or theology. "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself" was written in large letters on the walls.

At the suggestion of the "Mind Builder," a chime of bells had been installed, and he undertook the ringing of the chimes on Sunday mornings.

On the first Sunday after their installation, he went to the church to ring the chimes. It was an hour before the time for services, and Ruth had accompanied him, for they had become almost inseparable. The music of the bells began, and Peggy, who always came early, slipped into a seat and listened. How wonderful it seemed to the dwellers in Bucks Pocket. Nowhere in the world perhaps is there a more remarkable echo than in this little Pocket in the side of the mountain. As each note pealed forth, it traveled until it struck one of the walls of the Pocket, and then it was hurled back on the opposite side, and anon it traveled out, out across the Tennessee, dying away, to be followed closely by another.

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me," pealed forth the chimes, and the inhabitants lifted their eyes to the giant cliffs rising high above them.

And now another tune came from the deep throated bells. It was that cry of the soul, "Nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee." Every note was a prayer, every echo a call to God.

As the tones mounted higher and ever higher, the ringer had a vision of the snow-capped Alps, and nestling at its foot a Swiss village. He saw himself a barefoot boy, standing beside the old Swiss bell ringer, taking his first lesson. As the golden tones of the bells seemed to speak the words: "Even though it be a cross that raiseth me," his body swayed, he clasped his forehead with both hands, a wondrous light beamed from his countenance, as he shouted: "My name! My name is—is Doctor John Weston! My soul has triumphed, and my theory is proven to the world!"

Ruth was overwhelmed with joy. His enthusiasm had caught her in its sweep, and with her hands on his shoulders, her soul in her eyes, she hung on his words.

Seizing her in his arms, he drew her to him, and their lips met for the first time. Thus they stood, the man lifted out of himself by the great miracle of his triumphant genius, while the woman was equally transported by the miracle of love.

Peggy clutched her breast with both hands. The wicked thorn was tearing at her heart, and at every beat the blood was trickling from the cruel wound. She staggered to her feet, and reeled blindly as she groped her way from the church.

Not far away was her shrine of silence. Could she reach it before she fell? By a tremendous effort of the will, she did, and as the door closed behind her, she fell upon her knees, her face buried in her mother's open Bible, sobbing uncontrolledly.

Slowly the storm of grief subsided; she raised her tear-dimmed eyes, and they rested on a cluster of white roses that Simon had placed on the table. They were still damp with the morning dew, and as Peggy inhaled their fragrance, a sweet peace stole into her heart, albeit the pain was still there.

She was late for church, and John Weston was sorely disappointed, for it was to Peggy that his thoughts turned when he became conscious of his name. To her he wanted to tell the wonderful news. Every one was wondering about her tardiness. She was always in her place, and no service would have been complete without Peggy.

At last she came, and the "Mind Builder," now Dr. John Weston, had never seen her so radiantly beautiful. Her face was unusually pale, but this accentuated the brilliancy of her glorious eyes.

When she sang a solo, as was her custom, his soul was once more in the noble Alps, and Peggy was by his side.

At the close of the service, he rushed to her, telling her the glad news. "I am no longer the 'Mind Builder'," he declared joyously, "but Doctor John Weston, at your pleasure. And you are Miss Peggy Ware," he said, extending his hand in friendly greeting.

As Peggy placed her cold fingers in his warm, palpitating palm, she said faintly: "I am so glad." Before he could reply she was gone.

In alarm he followed her out of the church, Ruth keeping pace with him. "Are you ill, Miss Ware?" he inquired anxiously, when he had overtaken her.

"No, I think not, Mr. Mind Builder—I should say, Doctor Weston. It must be the proof of your wonderful theory that has overwhelmed me. For a moment I was lost in the most wonderful speculations, but I am gradually getting my feet back to earth." She laughed her old musical laugh, and Weston's anxiety was soon forgotten in the exhilaration of his new-found joy.

"Tell me," said Peggy, "all about yourself. Who are you? Where did you come from? And in the language of Cliff Anderson, 'Where are you gwine'?"

"There you go! Always wanting to know the why of everything. I am sure I can never fully satisfy that inquiring, analytical mind of yours."

"Anyway, you can tell us all about yourself, and that will satisfy us for the present, won't it Ruth?"

Thus appealed to, Ruth turned her dark eyes toward Doctor Weston, and the telltale blushes in her cheeks left no doubt in the mind of Peggy that Doctor Weston was the most interesting subject in all the universe to Ruth.

"To begin at the beginning," he said, "I was born in Switzerland. My parents died when I was quite young, and I was reared by a grand old physician, who was also my guardian. My father left me considerable money, so my education was not neglected.

"I chose medicine as my profession, and had the advantage of the best medical schools in Europe. My mind turned strongly to psychology and metaphysics, and the human mind became to me the most absorbing theme that could engage a man's attention.

"In my study of anatomy, I tried to locate the seat of consciousness. In the laboratory I became convinced that so far as concerns man's body, he was no more than any other animal. In fact, I know that the atoms that compose man's body are identical with the atoms composing all animal and vegetable life. I further learned that these atoms in their last analysis are nothing but force, electricity, if you please. All so-called matter is embedded in the universal ether, so that it is a part and parcel of this mysterious substance we call the universal ether, for lack of a better name. Back of this force, or universal ether, is mind—the universal mind—the all-mind—God.

"I became convinced that matter and force are simply forms, or manifestations, of mind, and that, inasmuch as all so-called matter is identical, all life had a common origin. This common origin, to my mind, could have been no other than the universal mind, giving expression in force and matter.

"But I found that while man's atoms and origin were identical with all other forms of life, there was something that removed him from the highest forms of animal life as far as the heavens are above the earth.

"My investigations and experiments led me to study the brain of man as the seat of his intelligence. I

became an acknowledged authority on the brain, and wrote a book that has been accepted as authoritative by the medical profession throughout Europe and this country.

"In my book I took the position, as you already know, that the brain is but the instrument of the soul—the soul being the real I, the man himself, while the body is merely his temporary abode.

"It was natural that I should make a study of so-called insanity. It was this phase of my work that finally brought me to the United States. The wife of a great financier had been pronounced hopelessly insane, and owing to the peculiar form of her malady, unlike any case on record, I crossed the ocean to treat her. Her cure was considered by the profession almost a miracle, but I knew that it was the application of simple mental laws that brought about the healing.

"I had heard of a peculiar form of insanity in the mountains of the South, especially among the women, called the "lonesome disease," and it was partly to study this strange phenomenon and partly for recreation that I came to Chattanooga.

"Here I heard of Bucks Pocket, the Peggy Ware School, and was also told that I could find in this neighborhood the genuine "lonesome" disease. So I boarded the steamer at Chattanooga for Bucks Pocket, landed at the most available point, and was proceeding in this direction, when two inquisitive strangers, thinking me a revenue officer, proceeded to knock me on the head and bury me. You know my story from that interesting episode to the present moment.

"I might add, by way of explanation, that when I was a boy I was very much attached to the old Swiss bell ringer who resided in our village. It was the height of my ambition at that stage of my life to fol-

low his profession. He taught me what I know about ringing the chimes, and having considerable musical talent, I was an apt pupil. Today, as I heard the chimes for the first time in Bucks Pocket, I seemed to be a boy again in the little Swiss village, standing beside my dear old friend, when all at once the bells seemed to thunder my name in my ears.

"This is my story, and I am the happiest man in all the land, for now I can take up my work where I left it off."

"Which means, I suppose, that you will leave us and return to Switzerland," said Peggy, a catch in her voice and her lips once more deathly white.

"I have no plans for the immediate future," he declared. "I haven't a relative in the world, and no reason for going any particular place. My work may be here. I am going to wait and see. I am sure I will know when the time comes to decide."

"Oh, I do hope you won't go away, Doctor Weston," exclaimed Ruth. "Peggy and I could never live here after you were gone!" She threw her arms impulsively about Peggy and pressed her cheek to Peggy's, golden hair mingling with raven tresses.

The man looked at the picture thus made by the two girls long and earnestly. They were both beautiful, but of a very different type. Ruth was vibrant with the life of the green grass, the bursting buds, the babbling brooks, the songs of the birds. She was the child of nature, and her every gesture was eloquent of the magnetism of her body.

Peggy, while possessing all the charms of a red-blooded woman, was filled with a something that made you think of starry heights, the ocean's roll, the cry of humanity, the cross of Calvary, the crown of glory, and the music of the spheres.

He was spellbound as he watched the lights and shadows that played on the faces of these two unusual women—one contented, happy in her love for him, accepting his every word and thought as her own; the other, a soul touched by the Divine spark, responding to his thoughts, leaping the intellectual and spiritual heights by his side, or perhaps preceding him and beckoning him to follow.

To Ruth the whole world revolved around Doctor Weston, and nothing more was to be desired; while to Peggy he was a kindred spirit, a soul that had come to her soul out of the night, and their thoughts, their hopes, their aims were one, and words were unnecessary between them.

Suddenly he exclaimed: "Peggy, where have I known you before? I have a vision of you sitting by my side, holding my hand for ages. It seems that it was from the beginning—from the time my soul first awoke from its long sleep."

Peggy did not reply. She probably could not have done so, if she had tried.

He continued: "I had this peculiar feeling as I lay unconscious after receiving my injury—that some good angel had been with me through a million years of unconscious wanderings, and finally when I found myself, this good angel," patting Ruth's head, "sat beside me and held my hand."

Ruth did not tell him that it was Peggy who held his hand through the long night, while his soul wandered through strange lands, tempted never to return to his body, brought back, perhaps, by the longings of Peggy's soul.

Peggy could not tell him; nor did she want him to know. She hoped that this secret would be hidden

from him until that day when their souls should stand revealed, free from the limitations of the flesh.

They had sat down on a moss-covered bank by the roadside, beneath the shadow of a giant white oak, hundreds of years old. The spirit of God seemed to be brooding over Bucks Pocket, and Peggy, at least, felt that a great work was being wrought here in the wilds of nature, with Nature's untutored children.

This feeling was shared to some extent by Dr. Weston, who said: "I feel somehow drawn to this spot by an unseen force, and it may be that here, where I lost my name, I am to lose myself."

"Perhaps it is here that you are to find yourself, Doctor Weston. Your coming here is a part of the great design in the weaving of life's web," said Peggy. "We may not be able to see, but the Weaver knows. The weaver is the soul, and he leaves nothing to chance, for the soul is an expression of the Divine intelligence that sees and knows the end from the beginning."

A savage growl startled the little group, and, looking in the direction from which it proceeded, they saw two men of the rough mountaineer type leading a vicious-looking bulldog. His eyes were red and bloodshot, his tongue black and swollen, protruding from his mouth, while he was well nigh exhausted from his fierce efforts to break away from the two men. Each man had a rope about his neck, so that if he started in the direction of one of them the other could pull him in the opposite direction.

Peggy, always solicitous about anything in distress, even an ugly dog, asked the men to stop and tell her about this miserable, savage-looking animal.

"Wall, Miss," said one of them, "this is the meanest dog in Bucks Pocket. He belonged to old man Renfro,

who lived up in one o' them deep gulches all by hisself, jest him an' the dog. They named him Satan when he were a pup, an' nobody would have him 'cept the ol' man. When he growed up, he could whopp any six dogs in the Pocket, an' no man wus safe to come nigh ol' Renfro's cabin. The ol' man died sometime back, we don't know jist how long, but some folks seed the buzzards flyin' roun' his cabin, and we decided to see what it all meant. We crawled up becuse we wus afeerd of Satan, an' when we got whare we could see, thare lay the ol' man out in the yard, the dog settin' by him, an' every time a buzzard would try to light Satan would lunge at him like the very devil. He seed us, an' started at us like a mountain lion that ain't had nuthin' to eat in a month, an' we tore down the bushes gittin' away.

"We finally got Bill Jenkins, who is a ol' cow-puncher, to lasso him, and when he got one lasso roun' his neck, and tied it to a tree, he throwed another one aroun' his neck, and tied it to another tree, so's we could git to the ol' man and plant him. Now we're takin' him down to the river to drown him, becuse none of us like to shoot a dog, even ef he is as mean as the devil. It's bad luck, you know."

"Won't you give him to me?" asked Peggy. "I want him."

The men looked at her in speechless amazement. They knew and respected Peggy, and her desire would be to them a command in ordinary matters; but her wish to own Satan was little short of madness. "You shorely don't mean it, Miss," said the spokesman. "He'd kill you ef he wus turned loose, an' ef we tried to take the lassoes off, he'd eat us up."

Without further argument, Peggy approached the

angry dog. He growled viciously, and the men pulled hard on their ropes.

"Let go the ropes," she commanded, and they did so, hurrying to a safe distance.

Slowly, calmly, she approached him, her eyes looking kindly into the lurid eyes of the dog, speaking gently, soothingly. He began to wag his tail, and as she placed one hand on his head he whined, and the tears came to his inflamed eyes, angry no longer, and with his parched tongue, he gently licked her free hand.

She removed the ropes, and putting her arms where they had cut his flesh, she said: "Come home with me. I want you. I understand you. You have never had a chance, but your opportunity is coming. I am going to give you a new name, for you are entering on a new life. In the old life they called you Satan (that means self; but in your new life you are to be known as Hero, for no dog, or man either, can be a hero until he gets rid of Satan."

Peggy laughed at this odd conceit of hers, and the others joined her, the two men going away, shaking their heads in bewilderment, muttering, "She ain't lak nobody else in this world."

At the forks of the road Peggy told Doctor Weston and Ruth good-by. They watched her until she disappeared over a little hill, Hero walking lovingly by her side, while one of her hands rested on his head.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

BACK TO THE OLD HOME

WILBUR WARE had been consumed by a desire to return to his old home, but his life had been so full of activity since his new birth, that he had not at first mentioned it to Peggy. He had purchased a plain marble slab for his wife's grave, intending to put it in place with his own hands whenever he could afford to make the trip.

Finally he confided in Peggy, and she was more eager than her father, if possible, to carry out his plans.

It was now the time of the summer vacation, and both were hoping that they might go before the opening of school in the autumn. In their perplexity, Cliff Anderson, as usual, came to the rescue.

One morning, just after the family had finished breakfast, he burst in unceremoniously. "I jest come to tell you that my big automobile come down on the boat last night," he said, "and I brought her over an' she's standin' out on the front. The feller I bought it frum in Chattanooga showed me how to run it. Mebbe you'd like to look at her."

Before he had finished, Peggy was half way to the front gate, followed by Ralph and Virginia, while Ware and Anderson brought up the rear.

Peggy was laughing through her tears when Anderson and her father came up. "What's the matter, Miss Peggy?" asked Anderson. "Don't you like her?"

"I do like it, Mr. Anderson. I think it is beautiful,

wonderful, but you should not have done that, Mr. Anderson." And she pointed to big letters on the body of the car, reading "Peggy Ware School, Bucks Pocket.

"You have done too much already, and you must have the lettering removed. This car is for you, Mrs. Anderson, and Ruth, and I am so happy for them to have it. And you must not spoil it with those big letters."

"Wall, now, I recon that is the purtyest part about the car, an' Molly an' Ruth insisted on it, an' 'corse I couldn't help myself." And he laughed good-naturedly.

"She belongs to the Peggy Ware School, all right, but we can all ride in her, an' all I ax is that I can be your chawfer."

He cut further protest short by saying:

"When will you all be ready to go up in the Cumberlands to yore old home? Me an' Molly'll be ready in the mornin'. I had been keepin' it as a sort of 'sprise to you," he added, apologetically.

"Can we be ready by morning, Peggy?" asked her father, trembling with excitement at this unexpected fulfillment of his dream.

"We can be ready, father, but what about Ralph, Virginia, and Simon?" replied Peggy, her thoughts always of others.

"Molly an' me done settled all that. Molly's sister is comin' to stay with Ruth, an' the kids can go up thare an' have a good time while we are gone. It'll be a change for 'em, an' Simon kin eat up thare an' help out with the chores.

"Doctor Weston can keep things straight, an' the chilluns will fall in love with him, for he is the finest man I ever knowed. I wus suspicious of him at fust, an' didn't lak him, but ef thare ever wus a perfect man, it's him."

He looked away across the Tennessee to the Cumberland range, dimly outlined in the distance, lost in thought for a long time, Peggy watching his face that had come to be so wonderful to her in its expression.

Bringing himself out of his reverie with a great sigh, he said: "I jest been wonderin' whut it all means, this change in Bucks Pocket. I know it all started when Miss Peggy come, but whut brought her, I'd like to know?"

"Then here comes this Doctor Weston, an' gits knocked on the head an' left fer dead, en, ef he hadn't, I guess he'd a been gone long ago, but now he's gwine to stay, an' he's axed Ruth to marry him.

"Next the parson here, who didn't believe in God at all, has changed his mind, an' it's jest good to see him. An' thare's the school, an' the church, an' the bells makin' the mos' wonderful music on Sunday mornin', an' it's heaven right here in Bucks Pocket, whare it used to be Hell."

"I wonder ef God really had anything to do with it?" and again he looked far away to his favorite mountains. "What do you think, Miss Peggy?"

"I think, Mr. Anderson," replied Peggy, "that God guides every one of us, and that we all have a work to do in this world. Sometimes we refuse to follow His guidance, close our ears to the Divine voice, and fail to do our work, but it is never God's fault, but ours."

"I have tried to follow the voice. I had a vision of this work, and deserve no credit for what little I have done, for I have done nothing more than my duty as I saw it. What I have done is so little compared to what you have done," and she grasped his hand, looking earnestly into his face. "You have done everything, Mr. Anderson, and it ought to be called the 'Cliff Anderson School,' You are the big instrument

in God's hand, and I have been the means of getting the music out of the big fiddle."

Anderson chuckled at this comparison. "You're the fust one that ever got any music outen me," he said. "An' I don't think it's me at all; it's all you, an' I am jest like one of them big rock walls way up yander, that sends the echo of the bells back across the valley an' out over the Tennessee yander. Ef I kin jest echo yore music, Miss Peggy, it will be all I want. Jest to stan' lak one of them cliffs an' send back the music of yore soul to these mountain boys an' gals an' their daddies and mammies.

"And when the old Cliff falls, sometime, jest put on my tombstone, 'He tried to be a good echo.'"

Peggy's eyes were overflowing with tears. Her father's hand rested on the broad shoulder of the stalwart ex-soldier and ex-King of the Wild Catters, and it was some time before the silence was broken.

"You are one of God's noblemen, Mr. Anderson," spoke Wilbur Ware, with great feeling. "And if I can be half as big an echo as you have been to us, I shall be happy.

"My life has been such a failure that I stand condemned before you. With all my education and opportunities I had at last to learn from you, Simon, and Peggy. To you I owe much, Mr. Anderson—more than I can ever repay!"

A look of pain swept over Anderson's face. He shrank as from a blow. His usually steady hands shook like one with palsy. In a voice that seemed unnatural and far away, he said: "Don't talk that way. It hurts me. I ain't nuthin' but the meanest ol' devil in Bucks Pocket, an' some day you'll hate me wuser than pizen."

Slowly he got into the new automobile, and he seemed to have grown old suddenly. There was a

stoop to his shoulders, a weariness to his step that they had not seen before. As he was leaving, he turned and looked back out of sad, lusterless eyes.

"Be ready in the mornin' by six o'clock," he said, "fer it'll take us all day to git to Chattanooga."

* * * * *

Before the sun's first rays had penetrated to the depths of the forest the "Peggy Ware School" automobile was ready for its first journey.

Cliff Anderson said: "Molly has put in grub jest lak they warn't nuthin' to eat outside Bucks Pocket."

Ralph and Virginia were delighted to stay at Anderson's big house. Simon's soul rejoiced because Peggy and her father were going back to the grave of his "Young Missus."

When Peggy said, sorrowfully: "I am sorry you can't go, Simon," the old man replied cheerfully:

"Don't mind me, chile. I'll be dah befo' you all gits dah. I foun' out long ergo to trabel widout goin' nowhere, an' I will be stan'in' by young Misses grabe when Massa Ware gwine ter preach he gran'est sermon you ebah heerd."

He looked the prophet, with his venerable features, his unfathomable eyes, his snow white hair. "A black seer, a black saint," thought Peggy. "What vast store-houses of wisdom you have entered that the worldly wise know nothing about."

Ruth was radiantly beautiful, and radiantly happy, as she stood beside Doctor Weston, waving farewell, and his face reflected a soul at peace.

Molly Anderson's enthusiasm bubbled like a mountain spring, while her husband showed unusual excitement for him.

Wilbur Ware's heart was too full for utterance. In the silence of his soul he communed with God.

Peggy, whose laugh was the merriest, whose eyes were the brightest, whose cheeks the rosiest, the heart and soul of every group, shrank in her corner of the big automobile, tugging, tugging at the thorn in her heart. The more she tugged, the worse it pained her, until she resolved just to leave it alone and forget it.

As they climbed the splendid road that carried them out of Bucks Pocket to the top of the mountain, she recalled their entry in an ox wagon, over an almost impassable trail. She drew a word picture of the scene, the old Wild Catter, with his long squirrel rifle, the beard hiding his features completely except his eyes, and his insistence that the Wares must not enter Bucks Pocket.

"That wus Mart Suttles," said Anderson. He has cut them whiskers off. Got enough hair offen his face an' head to pad a saddle blanket, an' now he looks purty respectable.

"You know he has been gwine to yore 'literate school, an' he kin read a lettles an' write his name, too. He is so proud of it that he goes around with a piece of chalk in his pocket, plankin' down 'Mart Suttles' wharever he kin find a big enuf place to write it. I tell you it all seems lak a dream to me. Ef it ain't no dream, then somethin' is leadin' us shore as yore born, an' ef it is somethin' leadin' us, I recon they ain't nothin' to do but foller.

"I've got a strange feelin' this mornin' that somethin' goin' to happen, an' I jest lak to think we're bein' led, 'case ef we is they can't nuthin' bad happen to us."

No one made any reply. Anderson was not much of a talker, but when he got to going everyone listened, for he was likely to say something that you might have said yourself, if you had only thought about it. He

was so abrupt and unexpected in his remarks that you never knew what was coming next.

"They ain't nobody along this road 'cept us an' the birds, an' I want you to sing that 'Kindly Light' song that you sing fer us at church sometimes—the one you said President McKinley loved. It seems to me thay ain't no better place in the world to sing it."

Without waiting to be urged, Peggy poured forth the words of the soul-inspiring hymn. The mocking birds ceased their songs to listen, and a thousand spirit voices seemed to take up the words and echo them through the forest.

"The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead Thou me on,"

And the golden voice died away, the echoes traveled farther and farther until you could not distinguish their faintest whispers, and then a thousand birds burst into a hallelujah anthem.

* * * * *

When they reached Chattanooga, they realized for the first time that they were creating a sensation. Whether Cliff Anderson had any such idea in his head when he had placed in big letters "PEGGY WARE SCHOOL, BUCKS POCKET," on the sides of the automobile, was a matter of conjecture, for he kept his own counsel. Crowds gathered wherever they stopped and began to ask questions.

A newspaper reporter, attracted by the unusual sign, and probably by the unusually beautiful face of Peggy Ware, attached himself to the party and became master of ceremonies. Here was a big story, and his paper needed it.

Peggy protested stoutly, but for once Anderson had his way, and the outfit was soon photographed collec-

tively and individually. Peggy was very beautiful, even if greatly embarrassed, as she posed for the photographer. At the hotel she had to reveal her whole life, her work, her plans, her dreams, to this inquisitive young man.

When he had found out all she knew, and some things she did not know, he turned his batteries on Wilbur Ware, Cliff Anderson, and Molly.

He was told that they intended to leave early the following morning, but he persuaded them to remain over a day as the guests of his paper, promising to show them the Chickamauga battlefields, and many other places of interest. He knew that there were several good stories in connection with the Peggy Ware School and Bucks Pocket and he proposed to scoop the rival paper in good shape.

When Peggy retired at the big hotel, she little dreamed that she would awake famous on the morrow. She slept late, and was finally awakened by Mrs. Anderson whispering through the keyhole: "Git up quick, Peggy, they's a whole passel of folks waitin' to see you. Cliff says the mayor is here an' a lot o' big bugs."

Peggy was frightened when Mrs. Anderson spoke of the mayor. She opened the door and invited her in. "What is the trouble, Mrs. Anderson? What have we done?" queried Peggy, in much perplexity.

"It wus all that cheeky newspaper feller," said Molly. "I can't read much, but he's got yore picter on the front page, an' on another one of me an' Cliff and yore daddy, an' the automobile with all them big letters on it.

"An' yore pap's been readin' it to me and Cliff. He told all about yore school, an' yore dad's church, an' the thousand acres of land we deeded the school. An' then he told erbout Cliff bein' one time the King of the

Wild Catters, an' what good whiskey he used to make, an' erbout yore pap being' a preacher here in Chattanooga, whare you wus born, an' yore baby sister bein' stole by gypsies, an' a whole passel more I can't remember, and about a thousand lies, too; some of 'em being about me, an' I'm gwine to tell him what I think of him if he comes roun' me any more, grinnin' an' bowin' like a jumpin' jack."

Peggy was hurrying into her clothes, so excited that she hardly realized what she was doing.

When Mrs. Anderson characterized the reporter as a jumping jack, Peggy laughed, and said: "What did he say about you, Mrs. Anderson?"

"He said I looked meek and lowly, an' when yore dad read that Cliff jest roared an' said: 'Well she shore deceives her looks.' An' I ain't gwine to stan' fer any sich insult."

Peggy was too much excited to prolong the conversation, and hastened to where her father and Cliff Anderson were waiting for her.

"Has Molly told you the news?" asked Anderson.

"Yes," replied Peggy, "she has given me a sketch of what the paper has to say about us; but I don't see why it should interest strangers."

"Wall, now, you jest wait a minit 'til you see that gang down thare in the parlor, headed by the mayor," said Anderson. "That newspaper kid has got 'em all corralled an' they are callin' fer Peggy Ware."

"Oh, I can't face them. I'm afraid," Peggy exclaimed, as she clung to her father's arm.

Wilbur Ware's face was very grave and serious, but happy. "Peggy," he said gently, "it is very wonderful, the way God is leading you. There is nothing for you to fear, my child. Just follow the light, as you have done when your way was so dark, and all will be well."

When she appeared at the doorway where the mayor and others awaited her, there was a murmur of astonishment.

"This is my daughter, Peggy Ware," her father said, somewhat proudly, as every one present rose to greet her.

"I am so glad you came to see me," she said sweetly; and the one sentence from the simple mountain girl, simply clad, had made a champion of every man present.

The mayor told her briefly that he had read in the morning paper of her school, and that he had often dreamed of such an institution for the boys and girls of the mountains, as he was a product of the mountains himself, but that it had been left for her to establish the first school where these boys and girls, no matter how poor, could be educated under the most favorable conditions in the world. He said he considered it an honor to meet her and to be allowed to be of some service to her institution.

Deferentially, he asked how she proposed to get funds to maintain the school.

Peggy looked around quite helplessly as she was called to answer this momentous question. Blushing and somewhat confused, she said:

"I haven't thought very much about where the money would come from. I just know it will come when we need it," and her eyes were full of faith as she looked calmly into the eyes of the mayor.

He was profoundly impressed, and bowing reverently before this mountain maid, he said:

"In the language of our Master, 'I have not seen such faith, no not in all Israel'."

He insisted on calling a public meeting for the bene-

fit of the Peggy Ware School, and it was arranged that this meeting should be held when the Wares and Andersons returned to Chattanooga on their way home.

Peggy Ware was the sensation of Chattanooga. The story of her achievements seemed to electrify every heart, and her name was on every tongue.

A busy day spent in sight-seeing, every moment of which was the opening of a new world to Molly Anderson, who had never traveled beyond her county-seat town before, and another night in the big hotel, from which Peggy could look down on myriads of dancing lights, and the party was ready for the journey to the old home.

There was but little talking during the day, as no one seemed inclined to be communicative except Molly Anderson. The others were occupied with their thoughts.

"You are the silentest lot I ever seed," said Mrs. Anderson, peevishly. "Here I am jest a-bustin' open to talk about all I've seen, an' you all set here an' say nuthin. I never knowed the world wus half so big before, an' I am that excited I ain't got good sense."

As no one replied, she poked her husband in the ribs half angrily. "Wake up, Cliff, an' tell me sumthin'. Ain't this the place whare you got Ruth?" She did not seemingly complete the sentence, but the big man by her side was wide-awake now and annoyed, if not angry.

"Yes," he hissed, "this is the place whare I got Ruth's big doll the last time I wus ever up here. I wonder how many more times you're gwine to ax me that d—d fool question."

"'Scuse me, Cliff, I didn't think." And she seemed half afraid of her husband.

"I ax yore pardon, all uv you," he said, shamefacedly. "Jest when you think you got the devil down, he rises up an' trips you. I guess it's a rasselin' match with a feller like me all his life."

"Never mind, Mr. Anderson," said Peggy. "It doesn't sound half bad when you say it, and we'll all forget it, if you want us too."

He turned in his seat so he could look her squarely in the face.

"I'm lookin' at the best angel an' the grandest woman in all the world," he said.

"Your wife and I are highly flattered, Mr. Anderson, for you were looking at both of us," Peggy laughingly replied.

"Huh, he don't mean me," grunted his wife. "An' I wouldn't want him to class me with you, Peggy, 'cause they ain't nobody in the world in yore class."

* * * * *

The news of the Wares' coming had preceded them, and the entire community for miles around gathered at the dilapidated old graveyard where Peggy's mother was buried. Peggy was kissed and caressed until a dear old soul came to the rescue.

"Pore child," she said, "she won't have a stitch of clothes on ef everybody that loves her gits a chance to hug her, an' they won't git through afore sundown either."

Of Wilbur Ware they stood in awe, for they remembered the austere doctrine he had preached to them, and then, after his wife's death, how he had denied God and burned his books.

New earth had been heaped on the grave, and this was covered with flowers that had been brought by loving hands. The stone had been placed at the head of the grave, and everyone waited breathless for the

first word from their former pastor. When he stood up and placed one hand on the stone, the people scarcely recognized him.

His face had undergone a marvelous change. The corners of his mouth no longer drooped, and the hard, burdened, care-worn look had left his face. Peace and calm had taken the place of devastating doubt, and a radiance of love emanated from him that all could feel.

"My friends," he said, "it is meet that I should come back to this spot to deliver my message to you and to the world.

"When we were last here the clouds were lowering, the snow falling, and the winter wind shrieked through the trees, and my soul was more desolate than the winter, for I felt that God had hid His face from me.

"Today it is summer. The sunshine is golden, the flowers are abloom, the wind is as soft as evening zephyrs, and my soul rejoices because I have seen God face to face and know that He never hid His face from me, but that I hid my face from Him and refused to see Him.

"When we buried my beloved wife, I refused to open my mouth, and you were all surprised, hurt, and indignant. I didn't know just why I did so then, but I understand now. I had nothing to say. I had no message of faith and hope, for I myself had none.

"I had preached a dead religion to you, and when the great crisis came into my life, I had nothing to sustain me. I did not know God. My conception of Him was one based on man-made theology. The theology that I had learned makes God a big, all-powerful man, angry, revengeful, who must be propitiated in order to win His favor.

"According to this teaching, He sits on a throne in His heavens, surrounded by a walled city, whose streets are paved with gold, ministered to by bands of angels who worship Him by casting their golden crowns at His feet, while He looks down into some cavernous depth where millions of poor souls are doomed to spend eternity, crying: 'Woe is me! Woe is me!'

"I taught you that man is a poor, creeping worm of the dust, born to be eternally damned unless he can in some way appease the anger of God. The Jews did this by sacrificing lambs and goats, and the so-called heathen people all over the world did the same. More than seven hundred years before Christ came, God, speaking through His prophet Isaiah, said: 'I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs or of he-goats.'

"Almost six hundred years before Jesus came to this world, Buddha, a great prophet in India, said almost the identical words, and the priests tore down their altars and offered no more burnt sacrifices.

"Moses allowed the Jews to worship God through the offering of their flocks, for their conception of God was wholly material, and they thought to obtain His favor by this sort of sacrifice.

"When Christ came to the world, He proclaimed what Isaiah and all the prophets and seers had done, that God is spirit, and that we must worship Him in spirit.

"A few developed souls understood Christ's message, and were filled with the Holy Spirit. He taught that we are not creeping worms of the dust, but Sons of God, just as He was the Son of God, and He promised

that His followers should do greater things than He had ever done.

"For a time, the early church worshipped a spiritual God, and it was filled with a power and zeal that have not yet expended themselves.

"After a time, however, the politicians and theologians got hold of the church and dethroned the God of Isaiah and Jesus, and enthroned the God of the Jews and the heathen world. Men of science, thinking men, were driven away from the church, and it lost its power.

"Men even denied Christ, and mocked at the Bible, because the theologians had preached a materialistic God and given the Bible a materialistic interpretation.

"I was as guilty as the worst of them, and when the light failed me, I wandered in a Hell of darkness, without a ray of hope.

"At last the dawn came, and I awoke as from a horrible dream. I was born again. I was a new creature. I knew my divine origin—that I was a son of God, that His spirit dwelt in me, that He changeth not, that I have always been His son from before the foundation of the world, and that I will always be His. I know now that there is nothing in all God's universe to be afraid of, except myself, this animal self, and that when I crucify self, henceforth no evil thing can come nigh me, and life will be one anthem of praise forever and forever!"

He had finished and pronounced the benediction before his audience realized that he was done. There arose a great sigh as from one man, and each one turned to his neighbor, but no one spoke. The silence grew painful, but no one was willing to break it.

Wilbur Ware was rooted to the spot, and over all

there seemed to brood a spirit that would not let them go.

Peggy was sitting near her mother's grave. She arose and stood beside her father. He wondered what she would say.

"We used to sing a song that some of us loved in the old days," she said, "and I think we will sing it again. You can join me in the chorus."

Then her voice rose, quavering and uncertain at first, but soon clear, vibrant, soul-stirring. "We shall meet beyond the river, Where the surges cease to roll, Where in all the glad forever, Sorrow ne'er shall reach the soul."

A thousand voices joined in the chorus, and as they sang, they passed in procession, wringing Wilbur Ware's hand, telling him that his message had brought new hope to their souls.

* * * * *

Peggy spent a few days gathering up the fifty boys and girls that she had arranged quarters for at her school. It was a happy lot of shy, awkward, rosy-cheeked youngsters that gathered at the little station several miles away from their mountain homes. Everybody came to bid them good-bye, and tears mingled with smiles as the last words were spoken.

Not one of them had ever ridden on a train, and few had ever seen a railroad.

The train arrived early in the morning, and was due in Chattanooga in the afternoon, and every mile of the journey held a new sensation for the enthusiastic children.

None of them were under fourteen or more than sixteen years of age, all bright-eyed and rosy-cheeked. They represented pure Anglo-Saxon blood, and Peggy felt sure that they had in them the elements for the

development of the highest type of American, Christian citizenship.

Wilbur Ware and Cliff Anderson had gone to Chattanooga a few days previously to be there when Peggy and Mrs. Anderson arrived with their mountain charges.

When the train pulled into the station, there was the mayor of the city to greet them, and with him Peggy's father and Cliff Anderson.

Words are inadequate to describe the emotions of the little group that marched down Market street. The boys and girls were filled with wonder. Cliff Anderson's stout heart beat more violently than it had ever done on the battlefield. Wilbur Ware's soul was lifted to God in thankfulness.

Peggy was overwhelmed at this new fruition of her vision, and in her heart she felt herself but a little child; while the Mayor, standing before her with bared head, paid reverence to the greatest woman in the South.

Molly Anderson was already mother to every one of the fifty. "These kids got to have somethin' to eat," she said. "I recon' they can git enough in Chattanooga to keep 'em alive 'till we git to Bucks Pocket, whare I kin cook 'em somethin' fitten to eat."

The Mayor had called a mass meeting of the citizens for that night, at which it was proposed to tell the story of the Peggy Ware School. And on the following morning Peggy and her party would take the steamer plying the Tennessee between Chattanooga and Decatur, Alabama.

It was a big, curious throng that filled the auditorium when the Mayor called the meeting to order. Peggy was in ignorance about the program or the part she was expected to play. If she had known, it is probable

that she would have shrunk from attending the meeting.

In a few well chosen words the Mayor explained the object of the meeting, and told the story of what Peggy had already accomplished. He drew a vivid picture of Bucks Pocket, the isolation and lack of opportunity of the mountain boys and girls. Nor did he fail to embellish his story with anecdotes about Cliff Anderson, the King of the Wild Catters, adding a few words about his wife, Molly. He also reminded his audience that Wilbur Ware, the father of Peggy, was at one time pastor of one of the churches at Chattanooga, and that he was well and favorably known to many of the old-timers.

When he had finished, there were loud calls for Peggy Ware. The Mayor had anticipated this, but Peggy had not.

"I cannot! Oh, I cannot!" she said, as the demand for her appearance grew more insistent. Taking her by the arm, the Mayor kindly, but firmly, drew her to the front of the stage, saying:

"You must say just a word to the people who are clamoring for you." Then turning to the audience, he said: "This is Peggy Ware."

For a moment she reeled as if she were about to fall, and her audience sat breathless. Pleadingly she looked into their kindly, eager faces, and the fear that clutched her heart began to release its hold. Timidly, with her voice little above a whisper, she uttered a few sentences, and the people scarcely breathed, so eager were they to catch her words, and so afraid that she was going to fail.

Gradually her tones grew stronger, and as she told them of what she hoped to do, she seemed to grow in stature, her words came tumbling out in a tumult of

eloquence, and the audience was caught in the sweep of her enthusiasm, and responded as one man to her burning message.

She sketched her plans for an institution that would accommodate hundreds of boys and girls, where they could be taught everything that they might wish to learn to make them useful citizens.

She told them of the magnificent tract of timber land that she wanted to convert into things of commercial value, giving employment to the pupils, leaving the land clear for scientific agriculture, when she proposed to grow everything consumed by the school. She told briefly of her plans for a herd of high class Jersey cows, a poultry industry, a department for the teaching of Domestic Science.

"And finally," she said, "we are going to teach our boys and girls the principles of Christianity as taught by Jesus Christ. In fact, this is to be the foundation and basis of all our work. We shall teach them that religion, science and philosophy are in perfect accord, and that Jesus is the model for all the ages, and that He never uttered a word that is not in accord with the very latest scientific discoveries."

She resumed her seat, and it was some time before the Mayor could be heard above the applause. When quiet was restored he said: "I want you to see the fifty boys and girls that Miss Ware has gathered up in our own Tennessee mountains. She is now on her way to Alabama with them."

He had placed them back of the stage, hid by a curtain, awaiting the psychological moment, for the Mayor knew how to handle his audience. He ordered the curtain raised, and fifty boys and girls, almost as wild as the foxes of their mountain fastnesses, looked with wondering eyes on the audience of well-dressed men

and women. Some of them were barefooted. All of them were dressed in homespun, but they had splendid physiques and open countenances.

This overt proof of the work of the Peggy Ware School aroused the enthusiasm of the audience to the highest pitch, and men from all parts of the auditorium began to shout, "What do you want us to do, Mr. Mayor?"

"We are coming to that in a moment," he said. "But first I want you to meet Miss Ware's father." Wilbur Ware's words went home to every heart, and his hearers proclaimed him a father worthy of such a daughter as Peggy.

Then there were loud calls for Cliff Anderson, and he tried to hide, but was dragged from his place by the Mayor, and when presented to the audience there were howls of delight. "I ain't no speaker," he said, "case I never had no book larnin'. I fit in the Confederate army when I was a big barefooted boy like one of these fellers here, an' when I got back home they warnt no schools, an' I had to work fer my mother an' the other kids. I might a bin somebody ef I had been edycated, but as it is I ain't nobody, an' don't know nothin'.

"I ain't got many more years in this world, but all the rest of 'em an' every dollar I got is gwine to the Peggy Ware School to help save as many boys an' gals as possible frum growin' up in ignance like I done."

The old Wild Catter had touched the soul of the audience, and when the Mayor called for donations, there was a deluge. One man who owned the finest herd of Jersey cattle in Tennessee gave a dozen cows. Another donated a full line of agricultural instruments. A big furniture dealer said he would furnish the school building and dormitories complete. Then there were

gifts of clothing, gifts of money, and gifts, gifts, until Molly Anderson exclaimed: "Ef they put it all on the steamboat, she'll sink to the bottom of the river, shore."

But they did get it all on the steamer. She delayed her sailing for several hours in order that nothing might be left behind.

At last they were off—the boys and girls leaning over the railing, their hearts filled with a happiness they had never known before, and near them stood Peggy, waving good-bye to the friends who had gathered to see them on their voyage.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE LONESOME FOLKS

DOCTOR WESTON had heard weird stories about a peculiar form of insanity, quite common in isolated regions of the mountains of the South. Having made a special study of the causes of so-called insanity, he was always ready to listen to these stories; and now, having little else to engage his attention for the moment, he determined to do some first-hand investigating. He told Ruth of these reports, and asked her if she knew of any cases of insanity in Bucks Pocket or the surrounding country. Glad to aid the man who stood for all the wisdom in the world to her, Ruth said:

“Yes, I know of several cases. One of them is not far from here, an old lady now, who has been queer ever since I can remember. Her name is Bowen, and they live up in Dead Man’s Gulch. I used to pass there sometimes hunting the cow, and she was confined in a cabin built of logs, about half the size of an ordinary room, with but one door, and not a single window. It had no chimney, and, of course, she could not have fire in the winter time. Her folks said if they allowed her to have fire she would burn herself to death. I was terribly afraid of her, and would creep up close to the cabin and listen; when I heard a noise on the inside I would run as fast as I could, expecting that she would break down the door and pursue me.

"Once I peeped through the keyhole and saw her. She sat in the middle of the room all huddled up on the floor, and I could hear her mumbling to herself. I listened, fascinated, frightened. It was some time before I could understand her. Finally I made out that she was saying, 'I am so lonesome, so lonesome,' and it hurt me so that I began to cry, and ran away, and I have never been back since."

Doctor Weston was electrified by Ruth's simple recital. Here was a condition that he had doubted existed anywhere in this twentieth century civilization. He had credited most of the stories he had heard as largely imaginary, but he could not doubt Ruth. Her recital had revealed to him her own depth of feeling and human sympathy, and had aroused in him a desire for immediate action.

"Surely the State provides an institution where such unfortunates can be treated," he said. "If so, why do they confine her like a wild beast?" asked Dr. Somerville.

"There is a place called the Asylum where insane people are cared for, but these mountain folks are queer that way. And when one of them gets this 'lonesome disease' they never tell the proper authorities, but build a hut like the one I told you about, and shut the afflicted one up in it until death comes to relieve her of her loneliness."

Doctor Weston could hardly wait for the morrow to visit Dead Man's Gulch, and his mind was busy in the meantime turning over Ruth's strange story.

Since the departure of the Andersons, Peggy and her father, Ruth and Dr. Weston had been much together. He had undertaken her education, and following his method of brain building, she had learned more in a few months than she would have learned in the

old haphazard way in as many years. Her use of English was well nigh perfect, and her progress in other lines of study were equally pronounced. He had taught her to call him John, which was quite against her inclination, for she stood in such awe of him. To her he was her God man, and her love for him was akin to worship.

As the days passed, Dr. Weston's love for this fast developing mountain girl grew apace, and he was satisfied and his soul was at peace. He was content to settle down in this haven of rest, build a home nest with this beautiful girl as his mate, and spend his life quietly laboring for the uplift of these ignorant people.

His vision was not complete without Peggy, she of the golden hair and soulful eyes. Yes, Peggy was different. What a wonderful girl she was. So unlike anyone he had ever known or read about. In her presence he always experienced a thrill that startled him. Her voice electrified him, her touch caused him to tremble in every limb. Yes, he understood. It was Peggy's soul. Everyone felt it. She cast a spell over man and beast. He remembered how the vicious bulldog surrendered to that same power that swayed him. Peggy was not made for love. She was too high above ordinary mortals for that. No man in the world was big enough for Peggy's love. Her love could never be personal; it must be universal.

Oh, yes, his life work was to be alongside of Peggy. The thought thrilled him. What a glorious privilege to be a co-worker with one whose shoe latches he felt unworthy to unloose. He heaved a great sigh, and Ruth, ever watchful of his changing moods, said solicitously:

"Why do you sigh, John, dear? What are you thinking about?"

"I am thinking of the lonely folks, Ruth; there are so many of them in this world."

* * * * *

Ruth and John were up with the sun and ready for an early start to Dead Man's Gulch. It was quite a distance, and they planned an all day trip of exploration in the great woods, the fathomless gorges, and among the lonesome people in whom Doctor Weston was so deeply interested.

The way led up the rocky trail that formerly led to Anderson's distillery. It was the month of July and the forests were clothed in their densest foliage, and in their depths, a thousand locusts and katydids outvied each other in raucous song, while myriads of insects joined in the chorus. In the shady nooks the dew drops would tremble on the leaves and grass until the sun reached its meridian. On the railroad ten miles away, the morning express bound for Chattanooga sent forth its shrill whistle, and the echoes reverberated and pulsated through the Pocket and high up among the cliffs and peaks. A steamboat on the Tennessee blew a coarse blast, and it sounded so plainly that it might have been just down at the mouth of Sauty Creek.

Ruth explained to Doctor Weston that this stillness of nature which caused sounds to travel such long distances foreboded rain, perhaps a thunder storm. He laughed at her prophecy, and pointed to a sky of azure blue, without a fleck of cloud on the horizon.

As they ascended Dead Man's Gulch, the sun reminded them that it was mid-summer, and the air was full of humidity. Doctor Weston was perspiring freely, and frequently stopped in the shade of a tree, removed his hat, and mopped his brow, to Ruth's great amusement. Her step over the rough boulders was

as firm and light as the mountain goat's, and she looked as cool as a "cowcumber," in the mountain vernacular.

Finally they reached a clearing, and rounding a point of rocks, they saw a man plowing an ox in a small field surrounded by a rail fence, very much dilapidated. At some places it was almost rotted away, and to fill these gaps so that cattle and hogs running at large could not enter and devour his meager crop, the owner had hacked down bushes and allowed them to fall so that these broken places would be obstructed.

It was a rocky field, and the sound of the crude plow scraping the stones and rolling them about could be heard quite a distance, but not so far away as the man's voice. They had been hearing him for a mile, perhaps, and Doctor Weston asked Ruth if it were some sort of wild religious ceremony.

"It is old Man Bowen plowing his steer," said Ruth. She laughed indulgently at his ignorance.

"Gee," "Haw," "Wo come here, Buck," and then a fusilade of strange oaths, that Weston mistook for incantations to some heathen God, made the welkin ring.

They waited for him at the end of the furrow, and when he saw Ruth and a stranger, and knew that they had heard his torrent of language, he was greatly embarrassed.

"I recon' you all heerd me a talkin' to this steer, an' I am sorry ef I said somethin' I oughtn't to say afore ladies," and he made an awkward bow in Ruth's direction, "but he wus broke this way by old Bill Jones, an' it's the only sort of language he understands."

"It's all right, Mr. Bowen," said Ruth, beaming good-naturedly on him. "It's the usual steer language of Bucks Pocket, and I've been used to it all my life. We are going to use mules, tractors, trucks, and au-

tomobiles before long, and then we will banish the steer language along with the steers."

"You don't say so," replied the old man, in open-mouthed astonishment. "Wall, I guess I'll fall back fudder in the mountains when all them things come, case I'm too old to larn any new language, an' you have to cuss a steer to make him mind you."

Ruth had the old man talking now, and she thought it opportune to tell him the object of their visit. She explained to him who Doctor Weston was, his interest in people afflicted with the lonesome disease, and said that the Doctor wanted to see his wife with a view of studying her case and curing her, if possible.

"Ef you wan't Cliff Anderson's gal, I'd a mighty heap sooner take my gun to ye, but bein's youse his gal, I'll do anything you say, 'case I know its fer her good," and he jerked his thumb in the general direction of a cabin that stood in one corner of the clearing.

On the way to the house, Weston plied him with numerous questions, as he was eager for information about these queer people.

"She's been that way fer twenty years, I suppose," he said, "but not havin' book larnin' I can't count time very well. I fust noticed it when our boy died. We buried him right up there on that knoll," and he pointed to a moss-grown mound where stood a crude wooden cross. "I used to make a crap every year down in the river bottoms, an' sometimes I would be gone a month at a time, an' she wus here all by herself, after he died," and again he indicated the lonely mound on the hillside. "She didn't have no one to talk to an' she'd set all day by his grave jest a starin' at nuthin'. Every time I'd come home I'd ketch her settin' thare jest that way. One time I come, an' she didn't know

me, an' she commenced to scream when she seed me, callin' me a devil an' sayin' I killed her boy, an' wus goin' to dig him up an' take him away. I called her by name, I talked to her, I tried to tell her who I wus, but it warn't no use. Then I tried to take her to the house, but she fit me like a wild cat, an' cussed some-thin' awful. I never heerd her cuss before an' it made my hair stand straight up, 'case she had allus been good sense she got religion at one o' them camp meetin's, an' she allus talked to me an' the kid about God, an' she made that cross an' put it at the head of his grave."

The old man's wrinkled, weather beaten face was now working convulsively, revealing a depth of feeling beneath his rough exterior.

"Wall, they warn't nuthin' to do but shet her up somers 'case she wus likely to kill me an' herself too. I had jest built a new crib to put my corn in, an' it wus the only place I could put her to be safe, 'case thare warn't no winders an' no fire place, an' a good stout door shetter so I could fasten her up when I had to go away to my work. I put her in thare, an' b'lieve me it war a man's job. I didn't have no shirt on, an' pow'ful little skin on my face when I got her in. An' fer a week, day an' night, she screamed and cussed an' I never slept a wink. I most went crazy, too. I kin hear her yet sometimes when the wind roars in the mountains of winter nights," and the old man shuddered. "I poked things in the door fer her to eat, an' she wouldn't tech a bite, but broke the dishes agin the wall until they warn't nothin' left but some tin cups an' plates.

"By an' by she begin to moan like, an' it grew weaker an' weaker ontill it were only a whisper. Then one mornin' I went to carry her breakfast, an' she was sittin' on the floor sayin': "I'm lonesome. I'm lone-

some," an' ef she's ever spoke another word in all these twenty years, I ain't heerd it."

They entered the cabin, and the bareness of the walls, the paucity of the furnishing, the absence of everything a civilized woman's heart craves chilled Weston's heart. To his inquiry, Bowen said: "No, we never had a book. She use to want a Bible, but I wouldn't git one 'case she couldn't read. An' when our boy died, she said: 'Oh, God, ef I jest had a Bible to bury with him!' and then I wished I had bought her one, but it wus too late.

"She never wus out o' Bucks Pocket but once in her life, that wus when she wus a girl jest afore we married. She went to a pertracted meetin' out on the mountain an' perfessed religion, but after we married, she never left Dead Man's Gulch. She never seed inside another meetin' house, an' never knowed what a railroad or steamboat looked like. I never thought nuthin' much about it 'til she got this disease, an' I been studyin' a lot to figger out what it is.

"When she got to sayin' 'I'm lonesome,' I thought it wus fer the boy, an' I recon' it wus somewhat that, but I guess it were worser'n that. I know more'n her in jest the same fix, an' some of 'em have a whole passel of chillun livin', and they git so lonesome they have to be locked up. Why, stranger, half these women never went twenty miles away frum home in their lives. They ain't got no book larnin', they ain't got no music, no stoves to cook on, no sewin' machines, not even a washboard to rub their close on. The men folks git out an' work, hunt an' fish, fill up on wild-cat licker, an' fight sometimes, an' it keeps 'em from dyin' of lonesomeness. Then we go to the 'lection once in a while an' to Court, an' we take our cotton to town an' sell it and hear lots of news about what's

gwine on in the world. But the women jest stay home an' cook, an' wash, an' iron, an' make close, an' hoe in the field and tend to the babies, an' they come along jest like stair steps, an' time ones out of her arms, toddlin' aroun', another one done come ready to take its place, an' it's no wonder they git lonesome, an' their pore hearts jest cry out 'til they can't stan' it no longer an' either die or git like she is," again indicating his wife by a backward nod of the head.

"I wonder sometimes ef they ain't nuthin' Uncle Sam or somebody kin do about it," and the old man looked pathetically toward the corn crib where his wife had been confined for two decades. "I wish she'd a been sleepin' out thare by him all these years instead o' bein' so lonesome," and Ruth caught the gleam of tears in his hard eyes.

At Doctor Weston's suggestion, they now visited the pathetic figure in the windowless cabin. To the presence of the visitors she paid no heed. The Doctor talked to her, asked her questions, but there was never an answer, unless it was the monotonous, "I am so lonesome."

Ruth was weeping, and Weston had to fight back his emotions. He asked the old man if he would permit his wife to be carried to Cliff Anderson's home and be treated by him.

"Kin you kore her, stranger; kin you kore her?" Bowen asked, trembling with excitement.

"Yes, Mr. Bowen, with God's help I can cure her," and John Weston looked the inspired physician.

"Ef you will, stranger, I'll b'lieve in God all the rest of my life," and the old man reverently bowed his head.

It was arranged that a wagon would be sent for her the following day, and Weston told Bowen that he

wanted him to come down and work at the saw mill where he could be near his wife when needed.

* * * * *

Ruth and John had not proceeded far on the return journey, when they were startled by a vivid flash of lightning, followed by a crash of thunder. Looking to the South, they saw a cloud rolling up like the boiling of a huge cauldron. Before it they saw droves of birds, racing to escape the coming storm, while an eagle could be seen mounting to dizzy heights, where he could bask in the sunshine, defying the raging elements below.

"We must hurry," said Ruth, "and find a place of shelter, for the cloud is traveling like a race horse." She led the way, speeding like a fawn, John following hard behind. Just as the first big rain drops began to patter down, they reached an overhanging shelving rock beneath one of the great rock walls overlooking the Pocket. They were hardly seated until the storm burst in all its fury. The sun was obscured, and but for the lightning, it was almost as dark as night. Every moment, seemingly, the cloud belched forth great sheets of flame, and the valley below for an instant was filled with liquid fire, and then the thunder crashed, peal following peal, as if all heaven's artillery had been concentrated in this one spot.

The rain fell in torrents, and in a little while there were dozens of miniature cataracts, where the water poured over the sides of the rock wall. Ruth's heart beat violently as John placed one arm about her, and held her close, so close that he could feel its wild beating."

For a long time no word was spoken, as each hesitated to break the silence of the awe-inspiring scene. It was the woman who first gave utterance to her

thoughts. "Why do we love each other?" she asked, looking shyly into the man's strong, intense face.

"Ah, my little sweetheart, you have asked a question that the poets, sages, and philosophers of all the ages have never been able to answer," replied her lover. "Why do the birds mate; why does the flower seek its lover; why does an atom of matter repel one atom that seeks it, and embraces with almost human intelligence another atom, exactly like the first so far as is revealed by the most powerful microscope? It is the law of attraction, and is one of God's great mysteries."

"Why did you come to Bucks Pocket?" she asked. "Why did Peggy Ware come? Why do things happen in this world, anyway?"

"You are thinking, Ruth, and I am afraid you are thinking too deeply for me. I am very proud of you, dear. You are a wonderful girl, and I love you very, very much."

"It's good to hear you say that, John, but it doesn't answer my question. You know I have been brought up in ignorance just like thousands of girls in the mountains, and now I am hungry to know. I want to know where I came from. Surely you can tell me for you are so wise. You tell me I have a soul. I have never seen it, but I do feel something wonderful sometimes. How long has my soul lived? Is it older than my body? You say God is in my soul. Please tell me about these things," and the earnest, eager eyes, the tense face told him that here was no idle questioner.

He was very solemn now. Here was an earnest soul groping for the light, and he had been sent as her teacher, and he realized that his was not only a sacred duty, but the greatest privilege that can come to any-

one. In simple language, that even a little child might understand, he said:

"Ruth, it fills me with great joy to find that you are already on the way to what Jesus called 'life and life more abundant.' He was the great master, but so few have grasped the spiritual meaning of his teachings that the great majority of mankind are still groping in the dark, but the light is breaking as never before on this planet.

"Your soul has always lived, and for some reason it came to inhabit your body at birth. I do not know why, but somewhere in the great mysterious ether that fills all the universe is a complete record of all the past experiences of your soul, and if we could read this record, we would understand why we are here together at this moment, inhabiting these bodies. Some day we shall be able to read this record, for it is the photographic plate on which is recorded or photographed every thought, and every act that has ever been from the time when the morning stars first sang together.

"Our thoughts are the most real things about us, for they never die. They live forever, stamped on this universal ether, and they are forces for either good or ill. Every thought I think will live throughout the ages and will affect me, and all other souls to a certain degree. This is why the Masters have told us that we must give an account for every thought we think. Our thoughts are the language of the soul, and this is why thoughts are so much more important than the words of our lips. It is through our thoughts that we talk to God. He sees every thought recorded on the universal ether, and can read the record, and we in turn touch God, know God, see God, through this medium of the soul.

"Even the fluttering of the sparrow with broken wing is recorded on this mysterious ether, to remain there throughout the ages, and our Father sees it. Jesus so beautifully expressed this truth when he said: 'Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.' This is the recording place of all that has gone before.

"Ages have come and gone, civilizations have risen and perished, races have flourished and vanished, cities of might and power have stood proudly for a time and then sunk into utter oblivion; continents have been formed, peopled and then lost beneath great tidal waves and not one soul left to tell the story. Worlds have been born out of the mind of God, whirled into space for untold aeons, inhabited by intelligent beings, some far below us, others so high above us that we would be like beetles by comparison, and then disintegrated to become fire mist, star dust, for other aeons, and again to come out of the formless void a world, beautiful, vibrant, pulsing with life, the home of another race of the sons of God.

"It is unthinkable that no record has been kept of this stupendous history, and I have no doubt in my own mind, regardless of what others may think, that this history is all written on the Universal ether, and that sometime, somewhere, in God's glorious aeons of the future, we shall be able to read the mighty scroll."

"What a fascinating thought," exclaimed the enraptured Ruth. "Won't it be glorious to read on and on and never finish, for all eternity will not be long enough to read it all, for it will be just as far back to the beginning as it is to the end."

The storm was over, the sun shone in renewed splendor, and the lovers emerged from their shelter

beneath the cliff, and turned homeward. A glorious rainbow was in the sky, both ends resting upon the earth, one just a little way down the trail. "I am going to the end of the rainbow," said Ruth, "to find a pot of gold," and away she sped, leaving John far behind. It was resting on a clump of honeysuckle bushes, as Ruth thought, and she was sure she could stand in its gorgeous coloring when she reached the spot. Breathless, she stopped where the end of the rainbow rested, and it was a disappointed face that greeted John when he came up with her.

"See, John!" she exclaimed, "It moved just as fast as I ran, and now it is just as far away as when I started." He made no reply, but she observed a look of sadness creep into his face. "Why are you so sad, dear?" she asked. "You seemed so happy just a little while ago."

"I was thinking, Ruth, that the end of the rainbow is like our dreams of happiness, of perfection. This enchanted land is always just out yonder, and we run eagerly to reach it, thinking to sit down and say, 'Soul, take thine ease,' but when we get there, like the rainbow's end, it is just as far away as it was before. We rest awhile, and start again, sure this time we can overtake it. We run faster than ever, and at the end make one tremendous leap, sure that we are in time, but, lo! our fairy land has vanished. We look ahead with tears of disappointment dimming our eyes, and mockingly it beckons us on. I sometimes think it will be so through the countless ages of eternity."

"We can be happy even if we don't find the end of the rainbow," said Ruth, trying to dispel his serious mien. "Maybe sometime when we see God, it will be the end of the rainbow, don't you think so, John?"

"God knows, Ruth; there are some things too deep

for me, and you persist in getting me beyond my depth. Now, one more kiss, and make me forget everything in the world but you."

Lovingly he folded her in his arms, and looking into her eyes, where he read the depth of a woman's love, he said: "Ruth, this is the end of the rainbow for me."

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

BEHOLD WHAT A FLAME A LITTLE
SPARK KINDLETH

PEGGY came into her shrine of silence as Simon was arranging a bouquet of roses on her table, still fresh with the morning dew on them.

"'Scuse me fer not bein' through," he apologized, "but I wus jes' foolin' along on purpose, I recon,' becase I feel so nigh de Lawd heah, I likes to stay as long as I kin.

"Den I wus thinkin' ob all dat evah happen to me sence I kin fust 'membah, an' it seemed so wonderful dis mawnin'. I guess I 'mus' be about eighty-five yeahs old now, 'cordin' to de way you an' Capn' Massa Lee figgers, an' I lib to see de grandes' school in de worl', an' you doin' what nobody evah thought of doin' befo'."

Without stopping for Peggy to reply, the old darky continued: "Talk about havin' faith lack a grain ob mustahd seed an' pullin' a sycamore tree up by de roots an' den plantin' it in de sea, dat ain't nuthin' to what youse done heah in Bucks Pocket. Youse done moah dan pullin' up all de trees in Bucks Pocket, an' dammin' up de Tennessee riveh. You done made dis place ovah, an' it's a garden ob Eden to whut it wus when we fust come heah."

"Don't say that I did it, Simon. You have been just as important a factor as I have. You will never know

how you have inspired me when there was no other earthly comfort."

"I'se pow'ful glad ef I has been any help to youah," the old man said, "'case I ain't gwine to be heah much longah, an' when I goes ovah yondah, it'll be pow'ful sweet to tell young Missus whut you says."

"I hope it will be many, many years before you will deliver the message, Simon. I shall need you for a long time yet," and the beautiful face of Peggy glowed with tenderness for the venerable old negro. Only people of the South can sufficiently appreciate this sentiment for the faithful members of the colored race. "Besides we don't have sickness any more in Bucks Pocket, and I think we won't have any more old people after a while. When these boys and girls grow up, they will understand scientific, Christian living, and when they are a hundred, they will possess all their faculties, and be just as vigorous and even more useful than when they were at forty or fifty."

"When dat time comes," Simon declared eagerly, "how much will it lack ob bein' Heabin right heah in Bucks Pocket?"

"That's a very wise suggestion, Simon. You know Jesus said: 'The Kingdom of God is within you,' and He further said that when we found this kingdom, all things that we needed should be added unto us."

"An' you believes dat too, an' dat's why yore school has growed frum nuthin' to de bigges' thing in Alabama. An' when you needs money, all you has to do is to come in heah an' ax God an' He sen's it to you."

"That is true, Simon. I simply take Jesus at his word, and as long as we do this, nothing doubting, there is no limitation to what we can do."

"You means by dat you kin des go on buildin' an'

buildin' ontill de whole worl' will be full ob de same sort ob Heaben we got heah in Bucks Pocket?" the old fellow asked, looking earnestly at Peggy.

"Well, yes, Simon, that's just what it means. If we would accept Christ's spiritual teachings and live them, it would solve all the world's problems, industrial, social, and otherwise. We would have no more wars, famines, strikes, or crime. Sin and sickness would be banished from the earth, and with these evils gone, there would be no more poverty."

"An' is dat what Jesus preached when He was heah on dis earth?" asked Simon, trembling with excitement.

"This was His teaching, Simon, and He promised its fulfillment."

"Den why don't all de preachers talk lak He did?"

"I suppose it is because of a lack of faith, Simon. I see no other reason."

"Den dey need a mustahd plastah 'plied to dem," he suggested, as he quietly slipped out of the Shrine of Silence, hat in hand.

When Peggy returned from her vacation bringing the fifty boys and girls from the Tennessee mountains, with a cargo of gifts from the generous people of Chattanooga, it marked a mighty step forward in the life of the Peggy Ware School. This meant an additional financial burden, for they must all be clothed and fed as well as provided with books.

Peggy's plans looked to making the school as nearly self-supporting as possible, and to this end, the boys and girls, who were all able-bodied, willing workers, were set to certain tasks for a period of four hours each day. This left ample time for study and recreation, and made the pupils strong, vigorous, and self-reliant. Peggy believed in the dignity of labor.

"Boys and girls, I want you to work and love your work," she told her school. "It is good for your bodies, your minds, and your souls. I believe that every man and woman, no matter what their wealth or calling, should work with their hands out in God's air and sunshine for a little while each day, if it is only to tend a little garden, a rose bush, or take care of a small flock of chickens, or any one of the thousand useful, beautiful things that one can do. The nearer we get to nature, the closer we come to God."

She always practiced what she preached, and with her own hands set the example for the women of Bucks Pocket. Her delight was a tiny rose garden, and every morning before the sun was up, Peggy could be found caring for her favorite flower with loving hands.

Before she came to Bucks Pocket, there was not a rose to be seen except those that grew wild in the woods; now in almost every yard there was an imitation of Peggy's rose garden.

The boys were under Anderson's supervision, and aided in clearing and cultivating the land, as well as operating the saw mill, building houses and other useful work.

The girls made all the garments for the school. The old-fashioned loom and spinning wheel had not been banished from Bucks Pocket, and many of the women were experts in the making of cloth, counterpanes, and coverlets. From this cloth the girls fashioned the uniforms for the pupils. The cloth was dyed with native roots, barks, and walnut hulls, with certain ingredients purchased from town, and the beauty and richness of coloring was a surprise to all who visited the Peggy Ware School.

Soon after Peggy's return from her old home in the

Cumberland mountains, Doctor Weston told her of his discovery of the "lonesome people."

"I am treating an old lady by the name of Bowen," he said. "She had been confined in a cabin all alone for twenty years, and the only word she uttered when I first discovered her was 'I'm lonesome.'"

"There are many more like her in these isolated sections, and I am anxious to build a sanatorium where they can be properly cared for and treated. They can all be cured, and I understand how to do it, and feel that it is a part of my mission to do this work."

"So I have been waiting for you to return to lay the matter before you. Of course, no one can undertake anything without you give your consent, because we all look to you for everything."

"I am in full accord with you, Doctor Weston, and I am sorry you have delayed beginning the work. You should not have waited on me. You, my father, and Mr. Anderson have the same right to go ahead with any work you approve as I have. It would be impossible for me to disagree with you about anything in connection with this work."

"I reckon it was mostly my fault, Miss Peggy," said Anderson. "I ain't got the faith that you got, so I didn't see where all the money's comin' from. I been talkin' to yore dad about buildin' you all a house, becuse you livin' in a cabin, an' you sleepin' in the attic on a straw tick on a Georgia bed, an' I stood it as long as I'm gwine to. You don't never think about yourself, an' me an' yore dad has decided to think for you jest a little."

"Tell me about the straw tick and 'Georgia' bed," said Weston. "I want to know about it."

"They ain't much to tell," Anderson continued. "Ef you never seen one, you couldn't understand it. I

guess you seed a straw bed when they hauled old lady Bowen down from Dead Man's Gulch, because I heerd Molly say they hauled her on a straw tick."

"My God, Peggy, is it true that that you are suffering such privations?" exclaimed Doctor Weston. "I had never thought of you in this way. You are always so bright, so joyous, so exquisite in your simple dress, that I associated you with a soft, dainty bed, pillows of down, carpeted floor, and beautiful furniture.

"I agree with Mr. Anderson. We will defer the erection of our sanatorium until you have been provided a suitable home and the comforts that you so richly deserve."

"You and Mr. Anderson have worked yourselves into quite a sentimental state over 'Poor Peggy,' and I would be in tears over her sad plight, if I did not know the young lady much better than either of you do. You are judging her from the outside, gentlemen, while I know the inside.

"There are two Peggy Wares, and you are thinking about the one that you can see. The Peggy you are talking about loves downy beds of ease, beautiful paintings, soft luxury, but she is not the real Peggy. The Peggy you don't see has learned that the sweetest sleep may come to those who rest on straw beds in sparsely furnished rooms, and that the softest pillow may pierce the head of the sleeper like a crown of thorns.

"Now the other Peggy says go ahead with the sanatorium, rescue these poor souls that are languishing for a ray of light, and let the house for the Wares take care of itself. It will be built, just when we are ready for it. In the meantime, I will sleep as soundly and be as happy in my attic room as I shall ever be even if I live in a palace with all the trappings of royalty."

"Gentlemen, Peggy is right," fervently exclaimed her father, who had been listening to the conversation. "She always makes me ashamed of myself when I am tempted to have selfish thoughts or to lose my faith in God."

"Ef the whole world wus like her," said Anderson, "they wouldn't be no use in dyin' to go to heaven."

"My good friends, you are always saying such lovely things about me that I feel how insignificant I am. It seems to me that my mission is to inspire others, and then they do the work, while I sit back and enjoy it."

"Before this conference breaks up, I want to give you the larger vision that comes to me about these 'lonesome people.' We all know the underlying causes, and it will do little good to treat the disease unless we remove the cause."

"That is very true," agreed Doctor Weston, "but that is a stupendous undertaking—something big enough for your 'Uncle Sam,' that you Americans talk about.

"It takes Uncle Sam so long to wake up an' stretch hisself," said Anderson. "Miss Peggy would have the job goin' good by the time he got his eyes open, and when the load got too heavy, he would step in an' help tote it."

"I have talked with father a great deal about establishing community center churches in each community, where the people can be taught and entertained. I say 'taught' deliberately, for I think that all so-called preaching should be teaching, and that all entertainment should be based on the fundamental idea of instruction.

"Let's build a chain of these community centers through the mountain districts of this county, and then extend our chain as fast and far as God wills it.

"Here we will teach the people in sermons, in books, in pictures, in lectures, and by and by we can close Doctor Weston's sanitarium, for there won't be any more lonesome people."

"A wonderful vision," exclaimed Weston, "but where will the money come from?"

"There you go again, Doctor. The same old question. What am I going to do with you men? Don't you know that all things are possible to those that believe?"

"I beg your pardon, Peggy, for this suggestion of weakness. I don't really mean it. It's just a habit that I brought over from the old life, and it's hard to shake off. I do believe, thank God. I have learned this lesson of faith from you, and I am ready to undertake anything in His name."

"Amen to that statement," said Peggy's father. "In the faith of the most wonderful daughter in the world, I am ready to take charge of this branch of the work."

"An' Cliff Anderson is ready to saw the lumber, help build the houses, an' do all in his power to save his people frum their ignance an' poverty, trustin' that the Lord will some day smile on him an' say, 'Cliff, you ain't half as bad as you think you is.'"

"He is already saying that you are a great soul, doing a great work," said Peggy.

"It helps me a pow'ful lot to have you say it, an' I'm gwine to live up to it some day, ef it takes the hide," the old man declared. "I recon, that's the way you got everybody goin' in Bucks Pocket. You don't preach to 'em, you don't tell 'em what not to do; you jest brag on 'em, an' 'tell 'em what wonderful folks they are, an' ef a feller's got as much pride in him as you could put on the pint of a needle, he's gwine to

live up to what you think about him. I think that's one of yore secrets, ain't it?"

"Well, you are pretty close to the truth, Mr. Anderson. "And that's the way we will build our community centers. We'll begin by 'braggin' on everybody. We'll tell them what a wonderful thing their soul is, and when they get to believing it, they will live up to their belief. Then we will show them a vision of their community as it will be ten or twenty years hence, and it won't be long until everyone gets filled with the vision. After that the work is easy, for we always grow just as big as our vision."

* * * * *

After this conference, the sanitarium was speedily built, and Doctor Weston gathered up all the women in the nearby communities afflicted with the "lonesome disease," and began applying his method of mental and spiritual treatment.

Wilbur Ware took up the preliminary work of the Community Centers; while Anderson pushed the clearing of the land, the operation of the saw mill, and growing various crops.

Peggy spent much time in her Shrine of Silence.

"Sumpin' gwine to happen big befo' long," old Simon remarked to Cliff Anderson one day.

"What makes you think so, Simon?"

"Becase dat chile stayin' in her Sinagog whole hours an' hours at a time, an' when she comes out her face is shinin' lak a angel. She's axin' God fer sumpin' bigger'n she evah ax befo', an' you min' what I tole you, it's gwine to happen."

"Well, I know one thing, Simon, and that is whatever Miss Peggy ax God to do he's gwine to do it. You kin jest bet yore bottom dollar on it."

In a few days after this conversation, a beautiful

automobile stopped near the school house, and two well dressed strangers alighted. They inquired of Simon, who was cultivating some flowers on the school grounds, for the principal of the Peggy Ware School.

"She's up yondah, whare you see de hunysuckle vine clim'in' ovah de hickry log cabin, but you can't go up dah, lessen she say so."

"Is she quite an elderly lady, or just an old maid?" one of them asked Simon.

The old man chuckled, a merry twinkle in his eye. "Well, boss, she ain't as old as Methusalem, an' she ain't as young as a baby. When you sees her, you kin do yore own figgering. Give me yoah cahds, an' I'll see ef she will receive you." And the old man bowed with a dignity befitting the Lees of Virginia.

In a few minutes he returned. "Miss Ware will receive you in her temple," he said. "Des foller me, an' I'll show you up."

At the threshold of Peggy's shrine of Silence, Simon paused, hat in hand, making a sweeping gesture for the strangers to enter. "This is Miss Ware, gemmen, de president of de Peggy Ware School."

The slight, girlish figure rose to greet them, a hand outstretched to each.

"I am so glad to see you, gentlemen," she exclaimed with her usual enthusiasm. "Won't you please be seated?"

"We were looking for the head of the Peggy Ware School," one of the visitors exclaimed. "I think the old darky misunderstood us."

Old Simon, who was lingering outside the door, rubbed his hands gleefully, as was his habit when he was enjoying an especially good joke. "Boss, youse done misundahstood yosef. De ole 'darky' ain't made

no mistake; youse makin' de bigges' mistake ob yoah life. You got annuder guess comin'."

"Simon has known the president all her life, and has made no mistake. I am the president of the school, and my name is Peggy Ware."

"I am Hubert Winslow, and this is my friend, Fred Cranston. I write motion picture stories, and my friend Cranston is one of the best known motion picture directors in the world."

"And my friend Winslow is one of the most eminent authors," said Cranston, "and we both feel it an honor to meet the celebrated Miss Ware."

"I suppose you might call us a trio or galaxy of eminents," laughed Peggy, "as you gentlemen are both eminent, I can shine in your reflected glory, thus completing the trio."

"Pardon me, Miss Ware," said Winslow, "we don't mean to give you the impression that we really amount to anything. It's only in the make-believe world that we shine. I feel already that my light is extinguished as I stand in the presence of real greatness."

"My light's out, too, and my hat is off," declared Cranston.

"You quite embarrass me, gentlemen, with your compliments. I trust it is not sarcasm, but your chivalry and gallantry that prompts your extravagant statements.

"I am just a plain, simple, mountain girl, trying to follow my vision, and I don't feel that I have yet attained to the slightest degree of eminence."

"You are mistaken there," declared Winslow. "Your fame has gone out far and wide, and hearing of you we have come to see, and like the Queen of Sheba, when she visited the court of King Solomon, I am already prepared to say 'the half has not been told'."

"You are a true Southerner," said Peggy. "I wonder if you are from Virginia?"

"I am from Virginia, and my friend Cranston is from Kentucky," declared Winslow. "May I ask if you are a native of this section?"

"Well, I am so nearly to the manner born that you can put me down as a native of our Southern mountains."

"We have both felt irresistibly drawn to this place," said Winslow. "I know that I tried to resist the feeling, and Cranston did the same. We endeavored to laugh each other out of the idea, but it clung to us so tenaciously that we finally said we would come and see what it meant."

"I am glad you came," exclaimed Peggy, her eyes bright, her cheeks aglow with enthusiasm. "To tell you the truth, I am not the least bit surprised. I think I had been expecting you."

"Then you must be the necromancer that brought us here," said Cranston. "If so, then I charge you tell why you did so!" He struck a dramatic attitude, and Peggy laughed.

"And I demand to know why you came," she exclaimed, imitating his tone and gestures.

"Since meeting you, Miss Ware," said Winslow, quite seriously now, "I think I have come here to write the story of your life and work. I have read of your work, and it will make a great picture."

"As I see you, there is a soul to your story that is lacking in the conventional motion picture. I have written the other sort until I am sick and tired of it. I think the public is getting weary too. I believe there is a big field for big, vital themes, representing life as lived by real people, and it is my ambition to write at least one such story before I die."

"And I am quite as ambitious to screen it," said Cranston, "and I want you for my star, Miss Ware."

"Oh, you'll need a brighter light than I am for your star, Mr. Cranston. It takes all of my shining for Bucks Pocket."

"You are going to shine for all the world, Miss Ware, when I have written and Cranston has filmed your story."

"I am eager to begin writing it. Won't you commence to tell us at once, give us the 'local color?' I want to get full of it, saturated with it, before I begin to write it. While I write, Cranston will get his locations, his props, and be ready to film it."

"We will find plenty of 'local color,' gentlemen," said Peggy, "and when you have absorbed this, I'll fill in the details of the story as you may desire."

"I have observed that you have written over the portals of your 'temple,' as Simon called your retreat, 'Shrine of Silence.' This will be a good place to begin. It is big local color."

"That will be the end of the story, Mr. Winslow, as I propose to tell it to you. You can put it anywhere in the story that pleases you, but I will give it to you last, and you must not ask anyone about it until I get ready to tell you."

"My curiosity is greatly aroused," Winslow declared, "but I will respect your wishes."

"I will call Simon, and let him accompany you to the various places of interest, and let you meet some of our principal characters, and afterward I want you to attend our first picture show. Tomorrow we shall be ready to begin the serious work of preparation, I hope."

Simon was in all his glory as he accompanied Winslow and Cranston. It afforded him a big opportunity

to sing the praises of Peggy, and there was no other theme in all the world one-half so big.

He conducted them through the school buildings, the work rooms, the factory where furniture was being made. They were shown the sawmill, the fields where but a few months previously great forest trees grew and now producing abundant crops. Down in the meadow was the herd of high class Jersey cows, which supplied the boys and girls with choice milk and butter.

"Heah is de spring house, whare we keeps de milk des as cole as ice," explained Simon, as he escorted the visitors to a large rock house through which the water from a big spring flowed. "Did you evah drink buttah milk out of a goahd?" asked Simon.

They both declared they had never done so, but would like to try the experiment.

"Milk allus am bettah outen a good sweet goahd dan any udder way you kin drink it," the old man went on enthusiastically, as he proceeded to pour a big gourd full for each of them. As they emptied their gourds and called for more, he laughed softly.

"You drinks it lak quality," he said. "You know dat you kin allus tell a shore 'nuff Southern gemman by what he eats an' drinks. Dey learn dis befo, de wah, when de ole nigger mammies didn't hab nuthin' to do 'cept study up sumpin' to cook fer de white folks. Dey learn to cook lots ob things what nobody else evah thought ob cookin', an' it wus de bes' eatin' in de worl'. Dah's possum an' taters, chitlens, hog jowl an' turnip greens, craklin' bread, souse, backbone an' spare ribs, hot biscuits an' fried chicken, an' buttah milk outen a goahd. When a gemman don't lak all dat, you know dey wus sumpin' wrong wid his eddycation."

Alongside the field of a hundred acres or more cultivated by the pupils of the Peggy Ware School, they

ran across Jeff Carnes, a relic of the old Wild Cat days of Bucks Pocket. He was plowing, an ox hitched by a yoke to a crude wooden plow.

"Dese gemmen want to talk to you, Mr. Carnes," said Simon, politely.

"All right, fellers, jest fire away, fer the steer is allus glad of an excuse to stop an' chat, an' I don't min' it myself. What is youalls' business in Bucks Pocket?"

"We are interested in motion pictures," said Winslow, "and are here to write the story of the Peggy Ware School and make a motion picture of it."

"See here, strangers, you can't stuff none o' that foolishness down me. Ef I wus guessin', I'd say you wus revenoos snoopin' round heah. But they ain't nuthin' fer you to be nosin' about. When the big Cap'n quit making 'er, we knowed they wus sumpin' up, an' we better quit, an' they ain't been a drap made in Bucks Pocket sence."

"What made the 'Captain', as you call him, quit making wild-cat liquor?" asked Winslow, eager for a story.

"Oh, it wus that Peggy Ware gal, I recon," he drawled. "I ain't heerd anybody say, but she jes' winds Cliff Anderson aroun' her fingers like a cotton string, an' I think she got him to quit. I axed him one day, an' he comes nigh hittin' me an' said, 'You jest keep Miss Ware's name outen my wild catten', an' I ain't never said no more to him about it."

"You talkin' about yore movin' picters. My Sal—she's my gal, you know, says they is gwine to be a movin' picter show at the church house tonight, an' she an' Jane, she's my wife, you know, is tryin' to git me to go. I tell 'em I ain't gwine to make a fool of myself by gwine up thare, becace they never wus no picter what could move onless somebody moved it."

Jane says maybe it's so, an', ef it is, it proves that the worl' is comin' to a end, becuse the Bible says, so she says the preacher says, that before the end of the worl' the people'll git weaker an' wiser. Wall, you'd haft to be pow'ful weak to believe that picters kin move."

"If you will come out tonight, and the pictures don't move, and move faster than you ever saw a dog run, I'll let you hitch me to your plow tomorrow, and I'll pull it for you," said Cranston.

"By gosh! You're game, all right," declared Carnes. "I think I'll go you one an' come with the folks tonight, an' tomorrow I'll let ole Buck rest, an' I'll plow you." As he visioned the well-dressed stranger yoked to the plow, he laughed heartily.

"You know, my Sal blieves everythin' that Ware gal tells her. An' she's tryin' to fix her hair and look jist like her. All the gals in Bucks Pocket is doin' the same thing. They all quit dippin' snuff an' quit goin' barefooted to church, an' the ole woman made me do without terbaccy long enough to buy Sal a pair o' shoes. Lordy, but it purty nigh kilt me! But they warn't nuthin' else to do. When the women folks git the Peggy Wares, I call it, they is wus'n a locoed hoss, an' we men mout as well set in the shade. Trouble is, most all the men got the Peggy Wares too, all 'cept me, an' Bud Whitman an' one or two more, an' my Sal says I'll ketch it ef I don't look out."

"All right, stranger, I'll be thar tonight, an' ef she don't move, I'll plow you tomorrow," and the old man chuckled as his ox ambled slowly away, dragging the crude plow.

"Wait a minute," shouted Cranston. "Suppose she does move, then can I plow you?"

He scratched his head, a shrewd look in his eyes. "The worl's gittin' wiser, stranger," he said. "I guess

not. Git up thare, Buck. See you tonight," and he was off down the crooked corn row, creeping at a snail's pace.

* * * * *

"Didn't you know she wus a Lee on her mother's side?" Simon replied in answer to a question from Winslow.

"Bless yore soul, her gran' daddy wus a cousin of General Robert E. Lee, an' he wus killed in de wah. I brung him off de battlefield. He an' Captain Anderson wus both shot at de same time, an' I carried Massa Anderson off too, but I nevah knowed who it wus tel de night de White Caps wus gwine to hang me, an' den he tole e'm about it."

"Tell us about the White Caps, Simon," said Winslow. "The plot thickens, Cranston. We are on the trail of the biggest story ever screened."

"Yo don't know nuthin' yet, gemmen; jest wait till you sees and heahs it all."

* * * * *

After meeting Anderson, his wife, and Ruth, Simon escorted them to Doctor Weston's sanitarium. Here they met Wilbur Ware and Doctor Weston.

"Peggy has already told us of your mission, gentlemen," said her father, "and I am more than glad you came. I think you will be greatly interested in Doctor Weston's work."

"I am sure we shall be," said Cranston. "Everything here is so real that it seems refreshing to me. I suppose it is because I have lived so long in the artificial world—a sort of make-believe life, where everyone wears a mask, and attempts to conceal his identity. It is so different here, where people are not playing an assumed part, but just living their natural lives."

"A wonderfully interesting phase of this life as I

have found it, is very tragic," declared Weston. "We have built this place to care for and treat a class of people who have the 'lonesome disease,' a term these mountaineers use to designate a peculiar form of insanity brought on by the barren, colorless life led by these isolated mountain people, especially the women."

"Ah, this is something new, something startling," exclaimed Winslow. "Do tell us all about it. What a wonderful feature it will be in our big story."

Doctor Weston sketched the conditions that prevailed in these out-of-the-way places, and described the mental state resulting in the lonesome malady.

"Can they be cured?" asked Winslow.

"Yes, I am curing them," answered Weston. "It is done by the law of suggestion. They have lost the connection between their souls and their minds, using mind in the sense that it is a function of the brain. It is my work to re-establish this connection, or, to put it differently, uncross the wires. When the wires are uncrossed so they can receive communications from their souls, it is comparatively easy to bring them back to normal. After that, it is a question of building the proper brain cells. It is just as easy to grow brains as it is cabbage."

Cranston and Winslow both laughed heartily at what they thought a pet joke of Doctor Weston's.

"That would be the most wonderful truth in the world, if it were a truth," declared Winslow.

"It is vitally true, I assure you," Weston declared eagerly. "Not only can you make your own brains, you can renew your body so that you need never grow old. The process is so simple that we are teaching it to the youngest of our boys and girls. You can build just such a body as you desire, with features and personality in keeping with your thoughts."

"If I can be shown the proof of these theories," cried Winslow, "Cranston and I will give the world a lesson on the screen that will stagger the imagination."

"Gladly will I show you the proof," declared Weston, "for it is at the foundation of all our teaching, and everywhere you turn you will find living evidence."

"Miss Ware is our most striking example, and after her come the others, from the greatest to the least, with every development from the old "Hard Shell" meeting house to what you see today. And this is only the beginning. The soul of Peggy Ware is building, building, day and night, waking and sleeping, and there is going forth from here not only this great truth, but the living evidence to support it."

"This is stupendous," declared Winslow, "and your honesty and earnestness convince me that there is some basis for your claims. I should like to believe it, for it means much to me, and much to mankind."

"If you asked me for one word that would give you a key word for the story you are going to write, I would say, 'Salvation,' declared Wilbur Ware.

"Make this the key, and build around it the concrete facts as you find them here, and you will have a theme that the world is thirsting for."

"Salvation just means accepting some religious dogma, doesn't it, Mr. Ware?" asked Cranston.

"That is not what the Peggy Ware School means by Salvation, Mr. Cranston. The theological idea of salvation is that a man must say he believes a certain thing, and he is instantly saved. It is too easy and means nothing. The salvation we teach is one that makes man responsible for every act and thought, that says he must pay to the last farthing—that he cannot shirk the consequences of his own wrong doing. We

teach our boys and girls that they would be cowards if they attempted to lay their sins on someone else.

"Knowing that they must reap what they sow, we have laid the foundation for salvation that begins in building a perfect brain in a perfect body, dominated by an awakened soul. The process ends when the animal man is crucified, and the soul is the Master of the life."

"But that is a hard road, a long road," said Winslow very seriously. "Is there no other way?"

"No other way, my friend, however long and painful the journey. It may take ages, aeons for some of us, but others will travel more swiftly to the same goal. Peggy seems to have lived ages in a single year, and others of us are trying to walk in her footsteps."

"I, too, would find the way," declared Winslow.

"And I," said Cranston solemnly.

"It's time to go to de picter show, gemmen," declared Simon.

"We certainly don't want to miss it," said Cranston.

"I think we will get some fine screen material."

The Mayor of Chattanooga had sent down on the boat the day before a projecting machine and full outfit for exhibiting motion pictures. The church had been fitted up and it was the night of the first performance.

The news had spread throughout the Pocket like wildfire, and long before the opening hour the entire population was outside waiting, from babies in arms to old, gray-haired grandfathers and grandmothers.

Peggy's boys and girls occupied the front seats, where their view would be unobstructed. Every seat was taken, and the aisles were packed. When the projection machine began to click and sputter, there was great excitement. Not a dozen souls in the house had ever seen a motion picture.

At last the pictures appeared on the screen. As the characters actually moved, talked, laughed, fought, right before their eyes, bedlam broke loose. The boys cheered wildly, the girls clapped their hands and laughed, the older people expressed various degrees of amazement.

Winslow and Cranston had never witnessed such a scene. If they only had a camera man and were prepared to "shoot it," what a sensation it would create in the cities.

"Write the story, Winslow, write it just as it is, and we will use these natives, just as we see them tonight," said Cranston, "and the great director felt a thrill of reality he had not often experienced.

It was a five-reel film, and when it was finished there were murmurs of disappointment. "Make her move agin," was shouted by a hundred throats; and to please them Peggy ordered the operator to run the film the second time. The interest and enthusiasm was greater than at the first showing, if possible.

Winslow and Cranston were caught in the surging tide, and schemes for helping Peggy carry out her plans were rioting through their heads.

Not satisfied with the second run, the crowd clamored for more. Not until Peggy assured them they should have a new picture the following night would they consent to go home.

"That's the bigges' thing I ever seed sence the woods wus burnt," said one old fellow, as the crowd was filing slowly out of the house.

"Huh," said his companion, "it beats a camp meetin' er a barbecue, an' I would lak to see one ev'ry night as long as I live."

"I recon' ef we can have them movin' picters onct in a while, we women folks won't be so lonesome," de-

clared a wrinkled old soul, her face well hid by her big sunbonnet.

"Ain't it the truth?" exclaimed a half dozen who were in full accord with her.

"Say, stranger," called Carnes to Cranston, "I turned old Buck out to grass an' told him he could rest to-morrow, but I'll have to git 'im up an' plow 'im, fer she shore did move, didnt she? An' I got the Peggy Wares as bad as my Sal."

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE SLACKER'S RENDEZVOUS

“**Y**OU have never told us the secret of your “Shrine of Silence,” Miss Ware, “said Hubert Winslow, one morning after he and Cranston had spent many weeks in Bucks Pocket and the surrounding mountain territory. “I have now written the story of your life, with its romantic activities, and am ready to learn from your own lips the ‘why’ of it. To my mind, the ‘why’ is the most important part of the story and everything else is detail.”

“I feel the same way about it,” said Cranston. “Since coming here, I have slowly come into your vision—at least I suppose that is it—and I have a feeling that you possess a great secret* that I need to learn, that the world needs to know, and that, somehow this secret that you must know, is the key that will unlock to all men the storehouse of happiness and abundance that you have evidently found. Won’t you tell us all about it?”

“I did not tell you at the outset, gentlemen,” said Peggy, “fearing that you would think me some sort of wild-eyed fanatic, and for many reasons I did not want you to get that impression. To the average man of the world, what I am going to say to you would be the babbling of an imbecile.

Saint Paul said that spiritual things must be spiritually discerned, and when one talks of the soul and things of the soul to those who are living and thinking wholly on the animal or material plane, one may expect ridicule and often scorn.

The great-souled Emerson said: "Every man's words who speaks from that life must sound vain to those who do not dwell in the same thought on their own part. I dare not speak for it. My words do not carry its august sense; they fall short and cold, only itself can inspire whom it will, and behold! their speech shall be lyrical and sweet, and universal as the rising of the wind."

"Since you have seen what we have accomplished, how sane and practical all our plans are, and know the story from the beginning, and are now in full accord with the spirit of the work, I am glad to try to tell you the 'why' of my work, of which the 'Shrine of Silence' is, to my mind, the incarnation.

"In all ages there has been an esoteric religion, not known to the masses, because they were too materialistic to understand. The prophets and seers of all time have known these deeper truths, and never since man has been man has there been a time when God did not have His witnesses in the world to these truths.

"Jesus came when materialism threatened to extinguish the light of truth, and restated its principles in a way that no other teacher had done. He revealed the whole truth to his disciples in spiritual language, because their spiritual eyes were open, but to the materialistic masses He spoke in parables. I believe the time is near for the revelation of the truth to the world, and I am so glad that here, in this out-of-the-way corner of God's vineyard, I may be an humble instrument in this revelation.

"In all ages men have talked to God. They have realized their oneness with Him and all His creation. Jesus' mission was to bring all men to this realization, this soul consciousness, this God consciousness, for

with it comes 'power to become the Sons of God,' in the language of one of the apostles.

"If I wanted to talk to my father about the most vital thing in my life, I should not want to do so in the busy marts of trade, where the clang and clamor would distract my mind and his attention.

"Men have learned that in order to talk to God, their souls must be attuned to the Divine Spirit, and that this can best be done in the silence of one's own soul. So Jesus sought the secret places, where he could talk to His Father face to face. All great souls have done so.

"This is the 'why' of my 'Shrine of Silence.' It is here that I have received wisdom, guidance, and power. It is here that I have found peace to my soul when it was tossed about by the tempest of selfishness.

"The first condition to God's guidance is the crucifixion of self. When we have done that, we can go confidently into the silence where only God is.

"Jesus said: 'Therefore, I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.' This is the 'why' of my life, of the story of the Peggy Ware School.

"It was in my Shrine of Silence that I asked God to send someone to help develop my vision of motion pictures for the isolated mountain people, and you came. Now our vision has grown and we want to take in the whole world with pictures that have a soul, that teach life.

"From the first feeble beginning in the old Hard Shell church house, until today, God has guided me in just this way."

"If we can get Peggy Ware's message over on the screen," declared Cranston, "we will set a new standard in motion pictures. For a long time I have

realized that my life was lacking in something, that there was an eternal longing in my soul that nothing could satisfy. I think I am beginning to get a glimpse of that something, and my coming to Bucks Pocket marks the beginning of a new life for me."

"You have voiced my sentiments," declared Winslow, "and I feel that we have discovered a secret here that will help to revolutionize the motion picture industry."

"It stands fourth today in magnitude in the world's industries, and some day it will be first, but not until it has undergone a great change. This change is fundamental, to my mind, and before it is effected there is going to be a great upheaval in the motion picture world."

"The fight has already begun," said Cranston. "There has been a big reduction in salaries and a curtailment of production. The public is turning to the legitimate stage in ever-increasing numbers, and even the long-neglected lecture is coming into favor again. And now the producers, the big and little stars, the screen writers, and directors are crying out against having notorious characters place the story of their sordid, vulgar lives on the screen."

"These are signs of the times," said Winslow, "and there are others. One of the biggest is the movement for Sunday closing laws and censorship regulations. The people who are protesting against filming the lives of notorious characters are also much exercised about the enactment of blue laws. The fight for Sunday closing of motion-picture houses is being strenuously opposed by them. The fundamental cause of the trouble they have not grasped. The fundamental idea of motion pictures has heretofore been entertainment. Under this head, the screen has been flooded with

thousands of stories more sordid, more repulsive than the life of any ex-murderess now before the public, and some of the people who are now protesting so loudly against these notorious characters, and against the screening of their life stories, are today engaged in making pictures either too inane or too dirty to be shown in a barroom, much less in a decent motion picture theatre. Such pictures have brought on the fight against the industry, and the clean people in the business, who are in the vast majority, should see where the trouble lies."

"Speaking of barrooms," said Peggy, "suggests to my mind that it was the saloon that furnished the prohibitionists with most of their arguments for prohibition. I think the motion-picture people who are producing the class of pictures you refer to are furnishing the advocates of Sunday closing and other repressive measures their arguments for these drastic laws.

"I am opposed to censorship, except the censorship of an enlightened public conscience. I am also opposed to closing the picture shows on Sunday, but unless there is a change in the standard of pictures now being made, we will see the picture shows closed on Sunday, and also fanatical boards of censorship.

"If the people engaged in making pictures don't wake up, there will be nobody to defend them. Just as it was with the saloon. It got so bad that no one dared defend it, except those engaged in the business, and 'bone dry' prohibition laws were the result. Those engaged in the motion-picture industry may well profit by this example."

"They must make the basis of pictures educational along constructive lines," declared Winslow. "They need not be less entertaining, less dramatic, less beautiful. They must be pictures with a soul."

"And they must be clean enough to exhibit in the churches," declared Cranston.

"If I were a preacher," said Peggy, "I would not object if there was a motion-picture theatre next door to my church. If my message were not vital enough to draw an audience, then I should prefer that they attend the motion-picture show.

"My idea is to combine the church and the motion-picture house, at least in the rural districts. That is what we propose doing in our community centers. Instead of fighting Sunday pictures, howling for censorship, and other blue laws, the preachers, the church people; in fact, all decent people, should rise up and take charge of this great educational industry and make it the most tremendous force for good in the world. This is the motion-picture era, and the industry must be rescued from those who would destroy the soul of the Nation for the sake of paltry dollars."

"Our idea of pictures," said Winslow, "will be just as strenuously opposed by many of those now in the business as they are opposing blue laws, for the reason that they call all teaching preaching, and say that people can go to church to get their preaching. I think that depends.

"We will give them 'Peggy Ware' as our first great constructive picture based on the fundamental idea of teaching, rather than entertainment. We will try the experiment and see if the public will support our views. If so, then we will know that people want to get away from the world of make believe, the world of the brothel, the dance hall, the saloon and the liaisons of either the upper or underworld."

"We will select our characters from real life," said Cranston, "taking people who have lived the life they undertake to portray on the screen."

"How could any actress, however clever, take the part of Peggy Ware, who did not have her soul, her vision? So with the other characters in our story. We will have a real Doctor Weston, an old Simon, a Wilbur Ware, and a Cliff Anderson. These people will act, not merely 'act acting.' What a joy it will be to see characters on the screen that act, rather than those that imitate acting.

"It may be all right for people without soul, character or vision to take part in the stories of the smart set, the artificial society plays, the reeking sex dramas, but they are incapable of playing great parts in real human drama."

"We are trying a new experiment," said Winslow, "and I have never in my life felt such assurance, such enthusiasm.

"We have commenced 'shooting' our scenes, and will push the work as rapidly as possible, for I am almost as impatient as a boy to see the first showing of Peggy Ware on the screen.

* * * * *

Bucks Pocket had been transformed in a short time from the den of the Wild Catters to the dynamic center of activities that were attracting attention far and wide. The governor of Alabama came to learn at first hand about the Peggy Ware School. He could hardly realize that the most lawless spot in the State had become the center of a movement that promised more for the mountain boys and girls than anything that had ever been attempted. He saw the practical workings of the Peggy Ware system, and became an enthusiastic convert.

"I wish I could pledge you State aid," he said. "but it is not in my power. It would require a special act of the Legislature, and that would be difficult to get.

If you had a strong, forceful representative from your county, fully imbued with the spirit of your work, he might be able to sway the Legislature. If every member could come here and catch the spirit, as I have, there would be no question about it.

"I have in mind the man to make the race for the Legislature," said Peggy. "He is the backbone of this institution, and there never could have been a Peggy Ware School but for him."

Cliff Anderson began to shift from one foot to the other, looking about in a frightened sort of way, like a big boy.

"Oh, it's you, Mr. Anderson," and it won't do any good for you to take stage fright this early in the game," declared Peggy. "There will be time enough for that when you meet Mr. Fuller, your opponent, in joint discussion."

"Now, see here, Miss Peggy, you are trying to make game of me," said Anderson, dryly. "It's a good joke for you an' the governor, and jest as long as you don't mean it, it's all right," and he grinned; but there was an absence of mirth from his features. Plainly, he was uneasy.

"But I do mean it, Mr. Anderson," Peggy persisted. "I mean it with all my heart."

Anderson was frightened now. He was seized with what the old deer hunters called "buck aguer."

His teeth chattered, and his lips were dry. He well knew that if Peggy made up her mind to have him run for the Legislature there was no escape. "See here, folks, this is gettin' serious. It all comes from that fool talk I had down at the court house that time when that slick Lawyer Fuller was draggin' me. I jist shot him a little hot air. O' course, I didn't mean it."

"I remember how the crowd cheered and shouted

'hurrah for Anderson!'" said Peggy, "and I am sure that you can be triumphantly elected."

"Bully! Fine!" exclaimed the governor. "Captain Anderson, the gallant ex-Confederate soldier, the ex-king of the Wild Catters, the man who fell beside the beloved Captain Lee, whose granddaughter is the president of the Peggy Ware School. It will be irresistible. You will be elected, and will be the most imposing figure in the Legislature. You will be the only ex-Confederate there. When you make your plea for a donation for this institution, you will sweep aside all opposition."

"I ain't got no edycation, I ain't no speaker, I ain't got no character. They'll prove I'm a thief, a crook an' the bigges' liar in ten states," said Anderson.

"If they prove all that, I am sure you will be elected," said the governor, "for everybody knows it isn't so. You are known as an honest man who always made pure whiskey, and you quit because you wanted to, and are now doing more for our dear boys and girls in these mountains than any other man in the State."

"I have jest decided to go to France and fight fer my country," said Anderson. "I have been thinkin' about it sence we declared war with Germany, an' I'm gwine to France ef they will take me."

The governor and Peggy laughed, but to Anderson it was no joke. "I feel like I ought to go," he continued. "Ef they won't let me fight, I kin be a stretcher bearer an' carry the poor fellers off the field when they are shot down. I am ashamed of these slackers who are dodgin' the draft, layin' out in these bluffs an' gorges, sayin' they ain't gwine to go, that they will fight Uncle Sam afore they will fight Germany. It makes my blood hot, an' ef somebody will roun' 'em up fer me an' let me take 'em one at a time,

I'll lick the devil out of every one of them; an' when I git through, they'll be pow'ful glad to put on Uncle Sam's uniform an' go over thare." The old man stood like a giant, and the Governor said admiringly:

"Anderson, I don't doubt that you could lick every mother's son of them, if you had a little breathing spell in between times. In fact, I don't think there is one of them that would face you if he could see you now. I have heard of what happened to Bud Whitman, the leader of the slackers, when he led a mob to lynch old Simon.

"Uncle Sam will take care of these slackers, and there are plenty of young men to do our fighting over in France. It is vastly more important that you should remain here and help carry on this work that has been so abundantly blessed by God. The big opportunity of your life has come in your old age, and you must not shrink from your duty."

"I'd ruther fight every slacker now hidin' in Bucks Pocket, an' then go to France an' fight 'til we lick the stuffin' outen Germany, than to run fer the Legislatur, an' have to meet that Jim Crow lawyer on the stump."

"You are not afraid of him, are you, Anderson?" banteringly asked the governor. He had hardly spoken the words until he regretted them. The old man was hurt. He shrank as if the governor had struck him, and his eyes showed the pain dealt his pride.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Anderson," exclaimed the governor, taking the big man's hand in his. "I just wanted to arouse you to a full sense of your duty."

"It's all right, governor. I understand better than you do. They ain't but one thing in this world or the next that I'm afeard of, an' that's Cliff Anderson."

"There is no hurry about coming to a conclusion, Mr. Anderson," said Peggy. "Take your time to think

it over, and you'll know what's right, and do it, for you are the same brave soldier that you were the day you fell beside my grandfather, twenty paces in advance of his men."

They fell to talking about the draft evaders, for it had come to be a serious question. About a hundred of them, it was reported, were now hidden in Bucks Pocket. They had come from the surrounding counties and concentrated in this Pocket, whose natural fortifications made it extremely dangerous for the officers to attempt an entrance. But a short time previously the sheriff of the county had been seriously wounded, and two of his deputies killed, in an attempt to arrest some of the draft dodgers.

Now they had rendezvoused in this place where one man could defend himself against a score, if secreted at some vantage point. They were provided with guns and ammunition, and provisions for a long siege. The "slackers' army," as it was called, was made up of young mountaineers, wholly illiterate, with no idea of patriotism or love of country. They were not cowards, they were ignorant. Hence they were easily led by men like Bud Whitman and Bill Kellet, both bullies, but cowards at heart. These leaders pretended to be German sympathizers, but this was a lame excuse for their own cowardly, unpatriotic conduct.

Peggy had been outspoken in her views, and had been active in such war work as was possible in this remote corner. All the old women were knitting for the boys over there, and all the older boys in school had volunteered to serve whenever their government could use them.

The Stars and stripes floated proudly over every building on the school grounds, and Bud Whitman had sent word to Peggy that unless the flags were taken

down he and his men would burn every house, including Wilbur Ware's and Cliff Anderson's. She had ignored these threats, but in her heart there was a dread that caused her many a sleepless night.

Doctor Weston, Anderson, and Ware wanted to intercede with the men, but were dissuaded by Peggy. She knew the temper of the leaders, the ignorance of the men, and in the inflamed condition of their minds, she feared for the result.

"I am the one to go to them," she said; but a chorus of "No's" greeted this declaration.

"I am leaving tomorrow," said the governor, "and I will seek an interview with the men before I go."

"It would be madness, governor," said Peggy. "They would kill you, just as they did the deputy sheriffs. We must wait the psychological moment. When it comes, God will direct us what to do."

"Woman, great is thy faith," reverently exclaimed the governor. "I defer to your inner vision, that transcends my judgment and reason."

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About a week after the governor left, Peggy received a letter from him, stating that he had represented to the military authorities that the civil officers could not cope with the organized band of slackers now hiding in Bucks Pocket, and had been informed that a company of United States soldiers would be dispatched to the scene to round up the "slacker army." He expressed the hope that Peggy would co-operate with the government and prevent bloodshed, if possible.

In a short time reports were filtering in by "grapevine" telegraph that a company of soldiers had already arrived and that it was encamped on the mountain just above the "mouth" of the Pocket. Through this opening between the giant walls of rocks there now ran

a splendid road, where there was formerly an irregular trail. It would have been quite easy for the lieutenant in charge of the soldiers to have marched his men down this road, but few of them would have reached their journey's end alive.

On either side, high up among the overhanging cliffs, Bud Whitman had posted his sharpshooters, men who could shoot a squirrel's ear off in the top of the tallest oak that grew in Bucks Pocket, without killing the squirrel. If one of them ever got a "bead" on a soldier, it meant certain death.

Since the coming of the soldiers, Whitman had issued orders that no one be allowed to leave the Pocket under pain of being shot by one of his sentries. He told his men that the soldiers dare not fire on them, that their coming was all a bluff, and that if they did not voluntarily surrender, there would be no danger. He assured his followers that no one had a right to shoot in making an arrest, but the sheriff, and by these false statements he reassured his men, who were becoming afraid they had carried their resistance too far.

Peggy, her father, Anderson, and Doctor Weston, all realized that the crisis had been reached, and that, if possible, the commander of the soldiers should be communicated with. They knew the great danger and risk in attempting to do so. Each of the men volunteered to undertake the task, but Peggy protested.

Simon, who had listened to the conversation, begged to be allowed to go. "I ain't got much longer to stay heah, nohow," he said. "An' I kin sneak out tonight an' see de Cap'n, an' ef dey git me dey won't cheat me outen many yeahs."

"My good old Simon, I could not let you go," said Peggy. "I'd rather go myself, but, of course, it would

not be quite the proper thing for a lady to do," and she laughed lightly.

"I have a brilliant idea," she went on animatedly. "I know just the person for a messenger, one that will not be suspected by the slackers."

Almost in the same breath, all of them exclaimed: "Who is it?"

"Now you are inquisitive," she replied. "I cannot tell you until after I have interviewed the person I have in mind. Please do not question me further, and I will tell you all about it tonight. In the meantime, I am going up to Mr. Anderson's to see Ruth," and before they realized it she was gone, leaving them wondering what Peggy had in mind.

These strong men had learned to let Peggy have her way in all things. Not that she was willful or headstrong; far from it. She often sought Simon's advice, and welcomed suggestions from everyone, even the humblest.

After she was gone, the men talked about the threats of Bud Whitman to burn the school buildings and the houses of Ware and Anderson. While they were earnestly discussing the danger, one of Peggy's pupils came in, breathless. "Where is Miss Peggy?" he asked, excitedly.

"What is it, son?" gently inquired Peggy's father.

"I don't want to tell nobody but her," he exclaimed.

Wilbur Ware explained to him that Peggy was gone, and that he was Peggy's father, and urged him to confide in him.

"I know you are her father, all right," he said, "and I'll tell you, but I'd ruther tell her."

"Of course, you would, son, and I don't blame you; but your message will be safe with us," and Peggy's father patted him kindly on the head.

Thus encouraged, he told them that he had been fishing up on the creek, when he saw Bud Whitman and Bill Kellett come down the trail, and sit down at the root of a big tree and begin to talk. "As they talked," he said, "they kept pointing toward the school house, and I got curious to know what they were talking about, so I crawled up behind the tree from where they sat, and I heard Bud Whitman say, 'We'll burn her down tonight, Bill, and while everybody is excited, you and I will slip out of the Pocket, git to the river, steal a canoe, and cross over to the other side of the river, and leave the other fellers to take care of themselves. It's gittin' too hot here for us, but before I go I want to do all I can to that d—d Anderson-Ware bunch.'"

"I didn't want to hear any more," he said, "but crawled away and beat it here to tell Miss Peggy."

"I want to thank you, little man," said Wilbur Ware. "You are a brave chap, and I'll tell Peggy all about it," and again he placed his hand lovingly on the boy's head.

"I wish Peggy were here," anxiously exclaimed her father. "I always feel the need of her in a crisis."

"So do we all," said Doctor Weston. "She is the soul of everything."

"When she's aroun'," said Anderson, "I allus feel that nuthin' bad can happen. I wonder why it is?"

"It's becace she trusts de Lawd, when de rest ob us des thinks we do," added Simon.

Hastily they planned to guard the school buildings, as well as Ware's and Anderson's homes. They felt sure that Whitman and Kellett would not take any of their comrades into their confidence. Therefore they would have but two to deal with.

* * * * *

Peggy was but a short time in reaching Anderson's home. Mrs. Anderson was not there, and there was no one to overhear what she told Ruth.

Before she had finished, Ruth's excitement was greater than Peggy's. "I'll go with you, Peggy, of course, I will. The cowards won't dare shoot us. I am not afraid of the whole bunch." Ruth drew herself up proudly, and if the slackers could have seen her, they would not have doubted her fearlessness.

Swiftly they stole away from the house, and clearing, anxious that no one should know their secret mission. Once out of danger of discovery by their friends, the girls threw off all restraint, and walked the road leading up the mountain side as carelessly as if they were going on a picnic.

A sort of wild recklessness seized Ruth, and at intervals, she would shout: "It's just me and Peggy, Mr. Slackers. Why don't you shoot?" Then she would burst out into song:

"If a body meet a body,
Comin' through the rye"

The very audacity of the thing paralyzed the activities of the sharpshooters, and not a man of them showed his face or raised a gun. It is doubtful if out of all that hundred draft dodgers there were more than two who would have harmed these beautiful girls, and those two were the cowardly leaders who were now plotting to leave their ignorant followers in the lurch.

As they neared the top of the defile they began to talk. Ruth said: "Peggy, I wish you were my sister. Do you know, I sometimes feel just like we were sisters? It's because you have done so much for me, I suppose, and you are such a wonderful girl, and I love you so.

"Old Simon told me once that I am just like your mother when she was my age. I am so glad of it, for it will make you love me all the more."

"I could not love you better, Ruth, if you were my own sister," warmly exclaimed Peggy. "I have noticed a remarkable resemblance to my mother, also, and I am glad you look like her, for I thought her the most beautiful woman in the world."

"I wonder why Doctor Weston loved me, Peggy, instead of you? You are so smart, so beautiful, and so sweet, and I am such an ignorant thing."

If Ruth had not been so self-centered at the moment, she could not have failed to observe Peggy as she threw out her hand as if she were grasping at something, to prevent herself from falling. She might have seen a face as white as it will be when Peggy closes her eyes in the last long sleep. But Ruth did not see, and consequently did not know that she had shot another thorn into Peggy's wounded heart.

"Oh, that's easy to understand, Ruth," said Peggy, making a brave effort at gaiety. "If I were a man, I would always choose you, and I think most men would."

"I don't see how you kept from falling in love with Doctor Weston, Peggy, for he is such a noble man," declared Ruth, tossing her head proudly at the thought of soon possessing her "prince," as she frequently called him.

"And suppose I did love him, Ruth, then what?" said Peggy, smiling enigmatically.

"I would be so sorry for you, Peggy, that it would almost kill me. But I am so glad you don't."

"I am glad, too, Ruth," and Peggy brushed the tears from her eyes as Ruth was looking toward the soldiers'

encampment, that had just that moment come into the range of their vision.

At their request, the soldier on sentry duty conducted them to the lieutenant's tent. He had heard of the "Peggy Ware School," and of its president, and was much flattered to have her call with Ruth, but anxious about their safety.

Peggy explained to him the situation and the necessity for her immediate return to Bucks Pocket.

Lieutenant Johnson told her that the Pocket was surrounded with machine guns stationed at all vantage points, and that unless the slackers surrendered he would shell them out, taking good care not to fire on the school buildings or the residences of any of the inhabitants.

After discussing the situation fully, Lieutenant Johnson wrote a note to the draft evaders, urging them to surrender peacefully and avoid bloodshed, telling them that they could not hope to escape. He informed them that if they did not hoist the white flag of surrender by nine o'clock the following morning from a high peak that stood out from the others like a lone sentinel, he would give the order to his gunners to fire.

Peggy undertook to deliver the note, and she and Ruth started on their return journey, leaving the handsome young lieutenant waving adieu as they disappeared around an abrupt curve in the road.

"Halt thare, gals," drawled a tall young mountaineer, as he stepped from behind a huge rock. "Don't you all know weuns got orders to shoot anybody passin' erlong this road?"

"Yes, I know it, Billy Wooten, and I know you wouldn't shoot me an' Peggy to save your own life," said Ruth, looking at him fearlessly.

"Wall, I guess yore right thare," he said, "becase Bud Whitman shore would shoot me ef he knowed I let you all go out to the soldiers' camp. You wus a-carryin' on so when you passed, it kinder locoed me, I recon, an' I said I'd jest wait an' git you when you come back. Now what you all up to, anyway?"

Peggy told him the whole story frankly, and asked him to carry the note to the slacker's camp.

"Ef you all will scoot along, I'll take it, an' tell 'em some one drapped it over the bluff an' I picked it up. Ef I tole 'em the truth, my hide wouldn't hold shucks."

Peggy urged him to use his influence with the men to surrender without a fight, telling him that he owed a duty to his country. She grew eloquent as she talked to him, and it was evident that he had already surrendered to her.

"Ef you could talk to all the boys like you have to me, they would all give up, all 'cept Whitman an' Kellett. I don't think they would.

"I'm ready to right now, but I ain't no quitter an' I'll go with the gang. But I see you're right. I hadn't never thought about it that way. I ain't afeard to fight. None of the boys is cowards. They are jest ignorant, like me. I shore do wish you could talk to 'em," said he looking earnestly at Peggy from his wistful, honest eyes.

"Perhaps I will," said Peggy, and she and Ruth were gone before he could reply.

"She's shore the finest gal I ever seed," he muttered to himself, as he returned to his hiding place behind the rock, to remain until his comrade should come to relieve him.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE SURRENDER

WHEN Peggy returned home, she found preparations well under way for guarding against the incendiarism threatened by Whitman and Kellett. Her father told her of the conversation overheard by one of her pupils, and reported to him.

Winslow and Cranston had volunteered to watch during the night. "If we could film things as they take place tonight, it would be fine," said Cranston, his professional instinct asserting itself even in the midst of the danger that threatened them. "We will have everything ready, and if they do fire any of the buildings, we will 'shoot the scene.' Of course, I sincerely hope that we won't have the opportunity.

"If there is a fight tomorrow between the soldiers and slackers, we will get it," said Winslow.

"Suppose the slackers surrender," said Peggy. "Won't that make a better scene than if there is a fight?"

"I think it will be much bigger, Miss Ware," said Cranston, "for it will typify a yielding to the demands of patriotism."

"Then I advise you to get ready to film the triumph of law and order, for I feel that the draft evaders will surrender," said Peggy.

"Miss Ware always knows, while we only hope," said Cranston.

A number of hardy mountain men, some of whom

had fought with Anderson in the war between the States, were ready to take their places for the night's vigil. When Peggy looked into their cold, determined eyes, and saw them grip their squirrel rifles, she knew that it boded no good to Whitman and Kellett.

"Please, don't kill them, men," she pleaded. "I feel that I would never get over it, and Bucks Pocket would never be the same to me again if you shed their blood."

"For your sake, Miss Peggy, we won't shoot unless they make us, but we won't be very hard to make, will we boys?" said Anderson, looking into the faces of the silent men who were receiving their final instructions.

"My gun's pow'ful easy on trigger, Cap. I keep her that way, an' ef I git a bead on Bud Whitman an' git skeered, an' my han' shakes a little, ol' 'Betsy' is liable to go off," so spoke an old Wild Catter with a cold-blooded chuckle.

"Please, please, be careful," said Peggy, laying her hand gently on the shoulder of the speaker, who was known as a desperate man, and on whose gun stock there were half a dozen notches, each representing an enemy he had sent into the next world.

"All right, little girl, I'll try an' not git skeered," said he, and a softer light came into his eyes as his heart glowed beneath the touch of Peggy's magnetic hand.

Anderson, Ware and Doctor Weston, with some of the "straight shooters" were posted around the school buildings. Winslow and Cranston took charge of the protection of the Ware and Anderson homes, assisted by men of undoubted courage and loyalty. The boys and girls at the dormitories were in ignorance of the impending danger, and retired at the usual hour.

Ralph and Virginia sensed trouble, and refused to

go to bed until Peggy had retold them many of the stories she had been telling them from their earliest recollection. Finally the sleepy heads began to nod, and Peggy kissed them goodnight and put them to bed.

She stole up to her attic room, put on a pair of heavy walking shoes, a short, thick skirt, and heavy wrap that she could turn up covering her head and hiding her features. Reverently she knelt for a few moments, communing with Him who had miraculously guided her feet along an enchanted highway.

She arose, her face calm and serene, extinguished the lamp, and softly descended the stairs, stood by the trundle bed, looking long and earnestly at the peaceful faces of Ralph and Virginia, kissed them once more, and went out into the darkness.

She peered cautiously around, and seeing no one, she walked as lightly as a cat to Hero's kennel, unfastened the chain from his collar, patted him on the head, whispering, "Come with me, Hero, and don't make one bit of noise."

The men were all gone, and no one had heard or seen her, as Peggy thought.

In this she was mistaken. There was one whose love had sharpened his eyesight, and given him a wisdom that comes to those who dwell much in the silence. Simon did not have to be told things. Like Peggy, he just knew them. When she released Hero, and started toward the slackers' camp, Simon was but a few paces behind her, and his steps fell as lightly as the dew. Had not his ancestors for countless ages, stalked the wild beasts in the jungles of Africa, and now love added wings to the old man's feet, and he could almost have walked on the air for Peggy's sake. He knew that his beloved Mistress would not allow him to accompany her, but he was willing to incur her

displeasure if needs be, to be near her, in case of danger.

Peggy did not follow the road, but slipped through the dense forest like a shadow, Hero at her side, her hand resting on his head.

She had reached the creek and crossed it on a big foot log that spanned the torrential stream. The roar of the water could be heard for a long distance, and there was no danger of anyone hearing her footfalls now. As she stepped from the foot log on the opposite bank of the stream, she was seized by rough hands, and before she could make an outcry, a handkerchief was thrust into her mouth.

Hero, with a savage growl, sprang to the throat of Bud Whitman, for it was he who had seized Peggy; but just as he would have fastened his teeth in a death grip, Bill Kellett struck him a cruel blow on the head with the stock of his gun, and Hero, stunned, fell at Peggy's feet, where he lay quivering and helpless.

Simon, who was close behind Peggy, had cautiously felt his way along the foot log, and just as Hero was felled, he reached the spot where Whitman and Kellett were now tying Peggy with a rope. Like one of his ancestors of old, springing on a tiger to vanquish it in a hand to hand conflict, the old man leaped on Bud Whitman, and bore him to the ground. He was fastening his teeth in Whitman's shoulder and his fingers in his throat, when a death-dealing stroke from Kellett's gun caused his jaws to relax, his hand to fall nerveless, and the old darky tumbled over in a heap, lifeless to all appearances.

"Dam him, we got him at last," said Whitman, still panting from his struggle with Simon.

"What are you gwine to do with the gal?" asked

Kellett. "She's on her way now to the camp to beg the fellers to surrender."

"It's a good time to git rid of her, too," said Whitman. "She's the cause of all this highfalootin' doin's here in Bucks Pocket. Ef it hadn't been fer her, I'd a got Ruth Anderson, an' I'd ruther have her than any gal I ever seed, but when Peggy Ware came to the Pocket, Ruth and her daddy and mammy tuk the big-head, an' most everybody else in Bucks Pocket turned dam fools, an' all on account o' her," and he indicated Peggy, who was lying on the ground, bound hand and foot.

"Thare's a canoe right down thare," said Bud. "We'll put her in it, an' turn her loose."

"Good God, Bud, you ain't gwine to do that, are you?" exclaimed Kellett. "Don't you know she'll go over the falls and drown?"

"I don't give a dam," said Whitman, "that's jest what I want. Take holt o' her feet, an' help me tote her."

Afraid to disobey, Kellett did as he was commanded. As they descended the precipitous bank, Hero began to show signs of life, and now staggered to his feet, and commenced sniffing the air in a dazed sort of way.

"It would be hell ef we fell in, Bud," said Kellett. "These rocks is pow'ful slippery, an' ef a feller's foot slipped an' he went in, it would be all night with him."

"They ain't no danger, you dam fool, ef you don't lose your head," Whitman replied roughly.

With much difficulty they placed Peggy in the bottom of the canoe that had been hewn from a big tree, and Whitman broke the lock with a stone.

"I'll give her a big shove," he said, "an' send her on the way to hell a-scootin'."

The canoe shot out into the raging torrent, so swift that no mortal man could swim across it.

Hero, recovering from the blow, followed the footsteps of Whitman and Kellett down the treacherous bluff, and reached the brink of the stream as Whitman was bending over to shove the canoe out from the bank. Springing high in the air, he leaped for the canoe, striking Whitman as he passed over his shoulders, the blow causing Bud to lose his balance.

For a moment Kellett saw Whitman reel as if he had lost his balance. "Ketch me, Bill!" he shouted, but it was no use. The boulder on which he was standing had been loosened, and the more he tried to balance himself on the rolling stone, the greater the momentum.

"Ketch me, Bill! Fer God's sake, ketch me!" rang wildly out on the night as Bud Whitman, his eyes starting from their sockets, plunged headlong into the whirling waters of Sauty Creek. Once he rose to the surface for a moment, and Kellett heard him shriek: "Ketch me, Bill! Ketch me!"

As he fled through the forest, that cry of "Ketch me, Bill!" rang in his ears long after Bud Whitman lay on the bottom of Sauty Creek, below the falls where he had intended to send Peggy to certain destruction.

The distance from the bank was too far for the faithful dog to cover, and his body sank into the water, but with his fore feet planted in the canoe, he began a battle for life. As the frail craft shot down the stream, trembling like a shell as it leaped from cascade to cascade, Hero slowly pulled his body into it, where he lay exhausted from his struggle.

Doctor Weston, who was stationed near the place spanned by the foot log, heard Whitman's cry as he plunged into the stream, and before the canoe had

disappeared from view, he reached the spot. In the pale moonlight, he could discern the dog holding on to the stern with grim determination, and he intuitively knew that Peggy was lying in the bottom. Without a moment's hesitation, he was racing along the bank of the creek, leaping boulders and fallen trees. He knew a place a half mile below where another foot-log spanned the stream. If he could reach it ahead of the wildly dashing canoe, he could leap from the log, and perhaps land in it. If he missed it, then he would sleep beside Bud Whitman at the foot of the falls. If he landed safely, he would be with Peggy, if indeed she were in the bottom of the canoe, as he had surmised.

He knew that he could not save her, and that it meant the useless sacrifice of his own life.

Ruth's face rose pleadingly before him, but his pace never slackened. All the world vanished, and he saw nothing, save the golden head, the fathomless eyes through which the soul of Peggy Ware had so often looked into his own soul.

Death with her would be sweeter than life with all the world for his choosing. In the supreme moment, he realized that he loved Peggy, with a love that comes to no man but once.

Why had he not known it before?

How sweet it would be to die with Peggy in his arms, although Peggy did not love him. Ah, if he could die and save Peggy! The world needed her, and he would gladly go on now, and wait for the soul of Peggy Ware after her work was done in this world. How wonderful it would be to wait over there in the Summer land, watching over her, in her schoolroom,

in her Shrine of Silence, yes, in her attic room, whispering love to her in the language of the soul.

* * * * *

Yes, thank God, he was in time. The canoe was in the middle of the stream. In another moment it would sweep beneath the foot log, and dash onward toward destruction. If he leaped one moment too soon or one moment too late, it would be fatal. If he failed by a hair's breadth to land in the bottom, the treacherous bark would overturn, and he would not even have the joy of dying with Peggy in his arms.

He stood breathless, poised for the leap.

"God help me," his lips spoke, and for a moment his body hung in the air, and then landed squarely in the middle of the trembling canoe. It rocked from side to side. It seemed that it must upset, but it began to rock less violently, then righted itself, and plunged forward on its mad race with death.

Hero was gnawing at the cords that bound Peggy. With his knife Dr. Weston cut the thongs that lacerated her flesh and took her in his arms.

"It is I, Dr. Weston," he said. "We are rushing to certain death, but God has been good to me, and has permitted me to die with you."

"Why should you want to die with me, Doctor Weston? You should want to live for Ruth."

"It is because I love you, Peggy, darling, with a love that a man can give but once in a lifetime. Death with you is a thousand times sweeter than life without you."

"My own, my own has come to me," said Peggy reverently. Her beautiful head nestled on his shoulder, their lips met in one long, last kiss as the roar of the falls they were now fast approaching, thundered in their ears.

"Peggy, I never dreamed you loved me," said he. "How long have you loved me?"

"Since the first night you lay unconscious after your injury. It was I who sat by your side and held your hand the long night through."

"Why did you never tell me, dear?" he asked.

"I should never have told you, and would have carried my love hidden in my heart to the grave, but for the certainty of death," she said. "In His presence, the soul stands naked, and as my secret will soon be buried from mortal eyes, it will hurt no one for me to confess the truth."

"I never suspected that you loved me, John. Why did you never tell me?"

"I must have been sleeping, darling," he said, "for I must have loved you all the while. I only awoke when I saw you rushing down this stream to your death."

"We have but a moment more, dear," said Weston. "Let me hold your hand as you did mine through the night while my soul walked amongst the shadows. And now a last good-bye kiss. With my lips pressed to yours, let us meet the Unknown."

"Not the Unknown, John, but the friend who has never failed me, our Heavenly Father!"

The canoe had swung in against the bank, and trembled a moment, as though conscious of its precious cargo, giving another instant for the last handgrasp, the last "God, we come to Thee!"

Ah, what an eternity in that last moment. Why did the frail craft still tremble on the brink of the cataract, refusing to take the awful plunge? What good angel held its prow to the bank, while the stern hung over the abyss?

Above the roar of the wild waters, a growl that grew into a cry of agony startled Peggy and Weston.

"It's Hero. It's Hero!" cried Peggy, above the roar of the cataract. "See, he is holding fast to something, preventing us from plunging over the fall!"

Doctor Weston crept cautiously to the prow of the canoe, fearing that he might upset it. Hero, with his feet planted firmly on the bottom, had seized a grape vine that swung out over the stream a little way from the bank, and was holding on with an almost superhuman strength.

Weston laid hold with both hands, and after a terrific struggle brought the end of the canoe against the bank and held it there until Peggy could step to the ground. She looped the rope with which she had been bound, around Doctor Weston's wrists, and commanded Hero to jump ashore. She held one end of the rope, and Hero, following her example, seized it between his iron-like jaws. The canoe slipped out from under Weston and shot over the falls, while he struggled for a moment in the water, and then with the combined efforts of Peggy and Hero, he stood in safety on the bank of the stream.

* * * * *

Wilbur Ware and Cliff Anderson heard the cries of Whitman, and rushed to the scene as fast as possible. They crossed the foot log, and were horrified to find Simon weltering in his own blood, apparently dead, a great wound on his head. They were searching for some clue to the tragedy, when two men came up with Bill Kellett, badly frightened, between them. Sternly Anderson said: "Bill, we are in a hurry. I'll give you less than five minutes to tell all you know about the murder of this old nigger. Spit it out quick!"

Bill's teeth were chattering, and bully like, he began to whine and lie.

"Bud Whitman knocked him on the head with the butt of his gun," explained Kellett.

"Why did he do that? What was Simon doing here?" demanded Anderson. "Now don't lie ef you know what's good fer you."

"He was tryin' to pertect Peggy Ware," said Bill.

"The hell you say!" hissed Anderson, beside himself with fear and rage. "Bring me the rope, boys. Now, tell it all in jest one minit without me havin' to ax you another dam question."

"Don' hang me, Cap, fer Gawd's sake. I ain't fitten to die. I'll tell it all."

In a few sentences he described the seizing of Peggy, the fight with Hero and Simon, the binding of Peggy with a rope and the placing of her in a canoe.

"Bud shoved it off into the creek," said Kellett, "an' somehow lost his balance an' fell in hisself, an' the last I seed of him, he come up onct and hollered 'Ketch me, Bill!'"

Anderson leaped on the foot log, and crossed it like a deer. "Don't hang the dam scoundrel 'til I git back," he shouted, and he was gone, racing down the creek like the wind.

"Take Simon to Mr. Anderson's home," said Wilbur Ware, "and tell Mrs. Anderson and Ruth to do whatever they can for him."

Blindly he followed in the direction taken by Anderson, his brain burning with the old fires of unbelief. He ran until exhausted, and then crept along at a snail's pace, falling frequently over the rocks, and tangled undergrowth.

He halloed until he was hoarse, but no answer came back to his agonized cry.

"Peggy, Peggy," he whispered, when his voice failed

him, and the mocking night wind seemed to answer back, "Peggy, Peggy."

At last he heard the roar of the cataract, and stumbled on. Dimly he was conscious of the fear that Peggy had gone over the falls, but somehow he hoped that she was safe somewhere below, for she had always believed so in God's protection. Surely He would not take her from her great work just in the beginning of her career.

He scrambled down the high bank, and stood at the foot of the falls. The moon had risen to its meridian and looked down on the whirlpool made by the water pouring over the cataract. In the midst of the whirlpool, going round and round in a dizzy circle he saw a canoe. Still he did not realize its meaning.

He crept closer until he reached a rock that hung out over the whirling water, and there at its extreme point sat Anderson, his head bare, his face between his hands, sobs shaking his body as the storm sways the mighty oak.

Placing his hand on Anderson's shoulder, Wilbur Ware said: "What is it, Anderson?"

"She's thare at the bottom of that whirlpool, ef there is any bottom, an' we won't never see her no more, no more!" he moaned. "She wus jest too good fer this world, an' God needed her up yander anyway. But He didn't need her half as bad as we do!" And again the strong man wept.

* * * * *

When Peggy and Doctor Weston were almost miraculously rescued by Hero, and stood on firm ground, they looked into each other's eyes, speechless. The reaction from the certainty of death to the duties of life, found them stunned. Their faculties were paralyzed, their limbs were numbed, and it was the joy of

Hero that aroused Peggy from her lethargic state. He leaped upon her, licked her hands, then bounded away along a trail leading through the forest, to return in a few moments and catch hold of her skirt and pull her in the direction taken by the path.

"Hero seems thankful that we have been saved. I thank you, my noble friend, for this rebuke," said Peggy, patting his head. "For a moment I suffered the most bitter pang of disappointment of my whole life, but you have shown me my utter selfishness, and I thank God for saving me from a selfish death."

"I, too, thank God, Peggy, for now we can live for each other," said Doctor Weston. "A little while ago we thought that we must die to have each other. Now a new world opens, one that I had only sensed in my dreams, and my soul rejoices for the experience that brought about the revelation of our love. Let me take you in my arms and feel your warm lips pressed to mine, not in a kiss of death, but in one plighting our troth."

She shrank from him, a cry of pain escaping from her lips. "Don't, Doctor Weston, don't! for God's sake!" she exclaimed.

He drew back, frightened. He could not divine the cause of her outcry.

"Not now, my friend, oh, not now!" she cried. "Let us follow Hero, he will guide us out of these woods, and then we can find our way home. My father, Mr. Anderson, Ruth, and the others will be beside themselves with anxiety, and Simon, dear old Simon, may be dead. Oh, how selfish I have been! God forgive me!"

Doctor Weston was too stunned for words by this sudden change in Peggy's attitude. and he followed her dazedly.

They had not proceeded far until they saw the gleam of a light toward which Hero was leading them. It came from the cabin of the man that halted the Ware family when it entered Bucks Pocket in the ox wagon. Mart Suttles and his wife sat by the log fire that burned chëerily in the wide-mouthed chimney. In answer to Hero's bark, he opened the door cautiously, his trusty rifle in one hand. Seeing Peggy, he exclaimed:

"Lawd bless yoah heart, Miss Peggy, whatever are you all doin' here at midnight? Come in, you look lak you are ready to drap. Here, ketch her, ma!" he said in alarm, as Peggy reeled, and would have fallen if Mrs. Suttles had not thrown her strong arms about her.

"Come help me put her on the cot, Mart. The pore thing is as limp as a rag, and whiter than a sheet. I'll make her a cup of strong coffee here on the coals in a jiffy, an' it'll fetch her back. My ma used to faint that way, an' coffee was allus the bes' thing we could give her."

Suttles explained that he was sitting up on account of the prospective conflict between the soldiers and slackers.

"I would a been gone up to the school house afore now," he said, "but Miranda begged me not to go, an' I been persuadin' her it were my duty, an' she had jist about give her consent when I heered the dog a-barkin'."

"That's whare you're wrong, Mart," said his wife. "You hed made up yore min' you wus goin', consent er no consent, an' when you git that way I allus give in."

The coffee was now ready and the strong woman

took Peggy in her arms as she might have held a child. "Drink it, honey, it'll do you good," she said.

Without opening her eyes or showing other signs of life, Peggy swallowed the strong beverage, and after a few spoonfuls she showed signs of returning consciousness.

You feel better now, don't you, little one?" said Mrs. Suttles, as her kindly face beamed with pleasure.

"Oh, I am quite well now, thank you," saying which Peggy closed her eyes, sighed deeply, and apparently fell asleep. Doctor Weston told the Suttles the experiences that brought them to their home at this hour of the night.

"Good Lord," exclaimed Mrs. Suttles, "her daddy will be plumb skeered to death, an' you settin' here with yore mouth open, bakin' yore shins by a good warm fire. Ain't you ashamed of yoreself, Mart Suttles? You ought a been half way thare before now."

"When she talks that a way, I allus agree with her," said her husband, winking slyly at Doctor Weston. "You all jest stay here, an' I'll go an' fetch her daddy an' Anderson an' a wagon to take her home."

Suttles hung his shot pouch over his shoulder, picked up his gun and was gone before his wife could fire her parting shot.

"Jest lak a man," she muttered, "to set aroun' an' talk while this pore chil's lyin' here more dead en alive, an' her folks skeered plumb crazy. She's the finest gal in the world, Mister, an' I'd ruther see half the folks in Bucks Pocket die than to have her go. I never believed in God til she came, an' a passel more wus jest lak me. I use to believe in hell, fer we women lived in hell most o' the time. My ole man'd come home full of pizen licker, an' beat me up, an' all the men done the same, but now they ain't no wild-cat

whiskey, an' they ain't no hell in Bucks Pocket, 'cept what them slackers is raisin', an' I gwine to make Mart help round 'em up, an' I am ready to do my part. I kin shoot," she said proudly, pointing to a long squirrel rifle that hung on the wall.

Peggy's breathing was now long and regular, and Doctor Weston told Mrs. Suttles that she was sleeping soundly, and would probably sleep for several hours, and insisted that she retire and rest while he watched beside Peggy.

"All right, Mister. Ef yore a doctor, you ought to know what's best," she said. "I'll be right in the next room, an' you kin call me ef you need me."

Left alone, Weston moved his chair beside the cot, took Peggy's hand in his, and waited for her awakening.

* * * * *

"Are we alone?" said Peggy, opening her eyes. "I must have slept a long time. I feel so refreshed."

"Yes, dear, you have slept quite a while, and I am expecting your father and Mr. Anderson pretty soon, as Mr. Suttles has gone to tell them our whereabouts. Before they come, I think it well for us to discuss our new relations, after the knowledge that has come to us of our mutual love. Shall we tell your father to-night?"

"Of course, I must inform Ruth at the first opportunity. It is the only honorable thing to do. You quite agree with me, don't you, my own Peggy?"

"Come, hold my hand, John, while I answer your questions," said Peggy, "for I have much to say to you, and I don't want you to interrupt me until I have finished. It must be said before my father or anyone arrives.

"Tonight you and I faced death as really as we ever

shall, and in His presence I confessed my great love for you. In that supreme moment you discovered that your love for me was of a different sort than your love for Ruth. I believe you are sincere in this. I think I can understand how you may love her very, very much, and yet find in me a greater love.

"It may seem to you tonight that your supreme happiness depends on having me, and that you must do so at all cost. This is where your self has taken the center of the stage, and your soul is in the shadow.

"I was so weak a while ago, I welcomed death that I might die in your arms. I knew that if I lived, I must give you up, and I preferred death."

He was about to say something in protest, but she placed her fingers on his lips.

"I know what you are going to say, dear. The argument you would make, and the reasons you would give are as old as the race, but they are so pathetically weak when measured by the standard of the soul. I am measuring by that standard now.

"When we thought we were doomed to go over the falls, I was measuring by the standard of self. Oh, I thank Him for rescuing me from my selfish desire!

"I am glad the great crisis has come, John. I am glad that we both know. It will be a great comfort when the way sometimes grows dark and we feel the need of human sympathy. I suppose we shall feel this need for countless ages yet.

"We will go back to the great world, stronger by reason of this knowledge, and more, because we have gained another victory over self.

"By a wonderful Providence, we have been brought to Bucks Pocket, and our lives have met in a most unusual way. We have both glimpsed the light that burns on the mountain of truth, and once having seen

it, a man is never the same again. He can never turn back if he would, and even if he tries, his soul, now conscious of its own being, its Divinity, will not allow him.

"If you and I yielded to the cries of self and sacrificed Ruth, we would fall like Lucifer, and for weary ages we would tread the winding path back to the point where we first saw the light. The tragedy of a soul deliberately turning back to self makes the angels weep.

"If you and I belong to each other in a spiritual sense, John, it would thrust us apart for aeons. If we took things in our own hands, ignoring the Divine Will, trampling on the upturned face of Ruth, a deadly canker worm would gnaw at our vitals, and at the bottom of every cup of nectar we sipped together, there would be a poison drop.

"Even if this were not so—if there were no Ruth—I could not marry you. That is not for me now. Why, I do not know; but I may know some day in God's good time. I do know, however, that there is a longing in my soul that you could never satisfy. In the moment of our supremest bliss, this longing, this soul passion, would cry out, and you and I would be as far apart as the poles. You would feel it, and it would be impossible for us to bridge the chasm, try as we might. No devotion, no words of love, no tender caresses, could satisfy in the slightest degree this soul longing.

"There is only one who can answer this call of the soul, and that is God. I find Him in my Shrine of Silence, and the agony in my soul gives way to peace.

"You could not be happy with me, and I could not be happy with you, for there would be a mighty gulf fixed between us as wide and deep as the one that separated Lazarus and Dives.

"The Wise Ones tell us that each has his soul mate, his complement, his other self. It may be so. I sometimes feel that it is so, and this longing may be for my soul mate. If so, the time has not come for me to have that longing satisfied. You may be my soul mate. My love is so great for you that I feel that it may be so. If you are, then I know that I am not ready for you; that I have other lives to live before you can be mine.

"In my present state of development, if I really possessed my soul mate, I should not feel my need of God. He would be my God, and my soul would be satisfied. Not until I have grown so big that I can have my soul mate and still have room for God, do I desire this consummation of a perfect love.

"We will go back to our world as if nothing had happened. God has already unmistakably pointed the way, and in His way we will walk joyfully.

"Ruth will be waiting for you with loving heart and outstretched arms, while I go to follow my vision until such time as He shall say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'

"Henceforth, you are to me Doctor Weston, and I am just Peggy, your most devoted friend."

* * * * *

Not knowing the fate of Peggy, her father and Anderson watched the foaming waters at the foot of the falls. Wilbur Ware placed his hand on Anderson's shoulder and tried to arouse him from his despair. "Let us hope," he said, "that it is not so bad as we fear. Perhaps she has been rescued in some way. I cannot believe that my wonderful Peggy lies at the bottom of this awful whirlpool."

"I ain't got no hope," said Anderson. "An' I don't want to live no longer ef she is gone, an' I don't think

I will. I hope my time'll come soon, but before I go I want to tell you sumpthin' that's been eatin' on me ever sence you come to Bucks Pocket an' brought that angel from heaven."

When Anderson said, "I ain't got no hope," Wilbur Ware's heart withered with fear. The old fires of unbelief burned again in his brain. His throat was dry, and he licked his parched lips as you have seen a wounded dog famished for water.

"If Peggy, my Peggy, lies at the bottom of this whirlpool, I'll sleep beside her," he cried hoarsely, his body swaying from side to side.

In another moment he would have plunged headlong into the seething water, but he caught the sound of Anderson's voice, and it held him back. He heard Anderson say: "Ruth ain't my gal. I got her in Chattanooga when she warn't more'n two years old, I should judge. I wus up thare with a load of wild cat whiskey, an' I had peddled it out an' sold my wagon an' team to a band of gypsies, becace the revenoo officers wus after me, an' I wus coming home on the boat an' dodge 'em."

The light gleamed again for Wilbur Ware. Perhaps his Florence lived after all. God was still in his world. He must have rescued Peggy. Intently he listened as Anderson completed his story.

"When I turned over my wagon an' got my money, the man I sold to an' another feller wus fussin' about a child, an' they wus so mad they talked right afore me. I soon found out it wus a white child they had stole, an' I stepped round to the back end of the wagon whare it wus hid, a cryin' lak its heart would break, an' picked it up an' started off. They both run at me with their knives, but I was a pow'ful hard hitter in them days, so I hauled off an' hit fust one an' then

tother, one lick a piece, an' the last I seed of 'em, they wus asleep.

"Wall, I didn't know what to do. The officers wus after me, an' the boat sailed in an hour, an' I had jest time to ketch her. They wus no time to think, so I jest beat it to the steamboat landin' an' they had done tuk up the gang plank, an' I had to jump, an' jest did make it.

"I tuk the kid home, an' tol' Molly a lie. I tol' her they give it to me at a orphan's home, an' she was that tickled becuse we never had no kids of our own, an' Molly allus wanted one, an' I did, too.

"I know you'll hate me, an' Molly'll git a divorce frum me, 'case I'm a thief an' liar both, and Ruth'll know I ain't her pa, an' what I done, an' she'll never call me 'Daddy' again. I allus felt safe ontill you come to Bucks Pocket, and sence then it's been hell, hell."

The old man was the picture of despair. His shoulders drooped dejectedly, and he looked hopelessly toward the whirlpool. "Ef she wus only here," he said brokenly, "she would be for givin' me another chance, but thay ain't nobody else but her an' God would do that, an' God wouldn't do it fer me, but He would ef she asked Him."

"I don't blame you, Mr. Anderson, far from it," warmly exclaimed Wilbur Ware. "I thank God, I thank you for saving my child from the gypsies. If Peggy is only safe, won't it be a happy family reunion? I hear a dog's bark. Let us go and find a house and get assistance to search for Peggy, if it be God's will that she is still alive. If not we will recover her precious body."

Slowly Anderson followed Ware's footsteps. His walk was that of a feeble old man. His spirit was broken, and his body bent.

They took up the trail leading toward Bill Suttles' cabin, attracted by a light in the window.

* * * * *

It was Peggy who first heard footsteps approaching: "Kiss me for the last time, John, until we meet on another plane," she said. Their lips met in a sacrificial kiss. It was the sealing of their compact and the crucifixion of self.

The door opened and Wilbur Ware, walking erect, followed by Anderson, feebly dragging his feet, entered.

"My daughter, my Peggy, alive! Thank God! Thank God!" reverently spoke her father.

Cliff Anderson was the old man no longer. The stoop was gone from his shoulders, the shuffle gone from his feet. He stood like Ajax, defying the lightning.

"Are you hurt, Miss Peggy? Are you able to be carried home?" he said.

"I am not hurt one bit," she said, "and I am so anxious to go home."

"Come on," said Anderson, as he took her in his arms, like a big doll, and strode out of the cabin. "Foller me, fer I know a nigh way that cuts off considerable, an' we'll be home afore that slow poke Mart Suttles gits thare."

Ware and Weston had great difficulty in keeping up with him. He strode like a colossus, and to their offers to relieve him of his burden, he would say:

"She ain't heavier than a feather, an' you fellers have had a purty tough time tonight, an' you got about all you kin do to carry yoreselves."

Peggy insisted that she be allowed to walk, but Anderson would not hear of it. "This is the fust

chance I ever had to do anything fer you, Miss Peggy, an't it may be the last one," he said.

"Why do you say the last one, Mr. Anderson?" she asked.

"Becase when you know whut I tol' yore daddy to-night, you'll find out I been the wust old hypercrite in forty states."

"I could never think that, Mr. Anderson. You know what I think of you. Now tell me all about it, and then you will feel better."

He repeated to her the story of Ruth's abduction already told to Peggy's father.

"Now, I guess you'll want me to set you down after you know how pizen my tech is?" The old man stopped, waiting for a reply.

"Yes, if you please, Mr. Anderson," said Peggy, as the old man let her gently to the ground.

Again his shoulders stooped, and he hung his head in shame.

"I want to stand on the ground so I can put my arms around your neck and kiss you, and thank you for being such a noble father to my sister."

Before he had time to protest, Peggy was putting her desire into action, and Anderson, bewildered and happy, said:

"It don't look half as black to me as it has ever sence you came to Bucks Pocket. Mebbe you kin git Molly an' Ruth to see it lak you and yore daddy does."

It was not hard for Mrs. Anderson and Ruth to get the same view point.

"I told you onct I wus the bigges' liar in Bucks Pocket. Now what you got to say erbout it, Molly?" asked her husband.

"I got to say that ef I wus big enough fool to be-

lieve it all this time, it don't make no difference," answered his wife.

"What are you gwine to think about it, Ruth?" and he turned doubtfully to the excited girl.

"I think I've got two of the best fathers in the world, and a mother here and one up yonder, and a sister that I am so proud of, and a husband that's going to be," looking shyly at Doctor Weston, "and I'm the happiest girl in all the wide world."

Peggy's first inquiry had been about Simon.

"He's never waked up," said Mrs. Anderson. He's layin' thare still as death, an' you can't tell whether he's breathin' or not. When they brought him in, an' I heerd they warn't no one to yore house, but Ralph and Virginia, I sent for 'em, and they wanted to set up with Simon, but I persuaded 'em to go to bed."

Peggy took up her watch beside the faithful old hero, and would not listen to any suggestion that she retire for a little rest. "He wouldn't leave me," she said, "if I were in his place, and I'll stay with him until there is a change."

Doctor Weston sat on the opposite side of the bed, feeling Simon's pulse, frequently, and listening for the faint fluttering of his heart.

Just as the first streaks of dawn shot their arrows across the East, Doctor Weston whispered to Peggy that the end was near. "Call the others if you want them to be present," he said.

With a breaking heart, she told her father that Simon had but a few minutes to live, and he aroused Ralph and Virginia, and the others of the household.

In a little while they were grouped about the bed where Uncle Simon lay, calm and motionless.

"He is gone," said Doctor Weston in a solemn voice, holding up his hand reverently. Ralph and Virginia

began to cry, while sobs came from almost every member of the group of watchers.

There had been no sign of emotion from Peggy. She stood as if transfixed, her eyes turned heavenward. "Come back! Come back! My dear old Simon, I need you so!" she almost shrieked, as she fell beside the bed, sobbing in uncontrollable grief.

Doctor Weston, still looking at the old man's calm face, thought he heard a sigh. Hastily examining him he felt certain the heart quivered, then began to beat intermittently. The eyelids moved convulsively, and then a great indrawing of the breath, a heaving of the bosom, and Simon slowly opened his eyes, and smiled feebly.

"Yes, honey, I heerd you, an' I done come back 'case you said you needed me, an' 'case Massa Cap'n Lee said fer me to cum back, an' you knows I nevah disobeyed him in my life."

"Tell us what you mean, Simon, if you feel strong enough to talk," said Peggy.

"Oh, I kin talk all right," he said, "'case I'se been given new powah. I des slipped outen dis ole body, an' stood fer a minit lookin' down, but I ain't thinkin' much erbout you all, 'case dar wus Massa Lee, old Missus and Young Missus, an' de stranges' thing ob all wus my mammy an' daddy wus thare, an' I ain't see 'em sence I wus a little boy ober in Africa. Dey wus all so glad to see me, an' Massa Lee said: 'Welcome, Simon! You has been faithful over thare in a few things, an' 'God has great joy fer you over heah.'"

"Den my mammy say, 'We so glad you come, little boy, it is gran' heah, an' we is with sho' nuff quality.'"

"'Bout dat time I look back, an' I see you all stannin' roun' de bed, an' me lyin' dar, an' I heah the chilluns cryin' an' de rest ob you sobbin', an' it made me so

sorry fer you. I tried to tell you how happy I wus, but nobody paid any 'tention to me. An' den I heerd dis heah chil' call me, an' say she needed me, an' I feel lak I willin' to leave heaben to come back to her.

"I say, 'Massa Lee, what shall I do?' and he say, 'Go back, Simon; an' ole Missus, Young Missus, my own daddy an' mammy all say, 'dat's right.' An' heah I is."

The sun rose in a blaze of glory, and there was great rejoicing in the home of Cliff Anderson. It was a new day, and to the anxious watchers it seemed a new heaven and new earth had been born from the agony of the night.

No one knew when Peggy slipped out of their midst. Some one called for her, and Ruth reported that she could not be found.

She was well on the way to the slackers' encampment. It was now almost eight o'clock, and at nine, unless the slackers surrendered, the fire of the machine guns would be poured into their ranks.

As she passed the school house, she procured a flag which she carried in her hand.

"Halt," said a rough voice, as she neared the rendezvous of the slackers.

"Is it you, Miss Peggy?" said Billy Wooten. "I'm glad you come. I give 'em yore note, but they can't make up their min's what to do. Ef you want to talk to 'em, foller me."

Just around a great boulder they came upon the camp where most of the men were gathered.

"Whitman and Kellett is gone," said Wooten, "an' we ain't got no leader, so we're just a waitin', not knowin' what to do."

The men eyed Peggy as though she were not a welcome guest.

"Are the men all here?" she asked Wooten.

"No, Miss, but I kin git 'em here in three shakes of a sheep's tail," said Wooten. He raised a horn that hung at his side, placed it to his lips, gave three long blasts, and Peggy saw men rising up from behind rocks and clumps of bushes, where a moment before the sharpest eyes could not have discovered a human being.

"They're all here now, Miss," said Wooten. "I think they'll listen to you."

Mounting a boulder that gave her a slight elevation so the men could all see her, and she could look into their faces, she said:

"Men, I think I understand this situation better than you do yourselves. There is not a coward among you. There were only two, but they are gone. You are all brave men and not afraid to fight, but you want to know why you are called on to fight. You need but one reason, and that is your country, your Government wants you.

"No patriotic American citizen needs any other reason. Whether you sympathize with Germany or France and England is wholly beside the question. Whether you favor war at all, or not, has nothing to do with the issue. You may be a conscientious objector, but that is no earthly excuse.

"My conscience opposes war; every fiber of my being cries out against it. The shedding of blood to me is horrible; but when my Country has spoken, I have no more opinions, they are all submerged in the duty I owe my Country.

"Some great patriot once said, when patriotism was a virtue, 'My Country, right or wrong.'

"It is fashionable in some quarters today to decry this, but I believe it is a principle that holds good to-

day just as it did when Washington fought at Valley Forge.

"I'll tell you why it's the true American doctrine, men. This is a Republic where a majority rules, and when the majority speaks, the individual must bow in obedience. Otherwise we would have no law, no government, no country. Every man would be a law unto himself, and anarchy would trample our flag in the dust, and civilization would plunge into chaos.

"Our Government, through our duly elected representatives, says to go to France and fight Germany, and I want every man here to go and show them the sort of mettle we Southern mountaineers are made of. Will you do it?"

"I will," said Billy Wooten, and a chorus of "I wills" went up from the camp.

"All of you who will go, stand up," said Peggy.

Every man rose to his feet. Peggy unfurled her flag, and waving it high above her head, she shouted, "Three cheers for the stars and stripes." And the men joined in with hearty good will.

"We have but twenty minutes to reach that high peak," she said, pointing to the lone sentinel that kept grim watch over Bucks Pocket. "Who will volunteer to go with me?"

"I'll go," said Wooten, and they were off for a race with time.

Peggy hastily looked at her watch as they neared the summit. "We have just five minutes," she said. "Let's hurry." She was breathless when they reached the last steep climb.

"I can't go on," she said piteously. "Go ahead and wave this white flag," she said, handing Wooten her handkerchief.

"Let me climb up an' then I can reach down an' pull

you up," said Wooten. "I want you to be thare, too."

He scrambled up the face of the rock, threw himself flat on the ground, and reaching far over, cried: "Gimme yore hands."

Grasping Peggy firmly by the wrists, he drew her up until she lay balanced over the edge of the rock.

"Wait a minit," he said, "'til I git on my feet, an' then I'll help you on yorn."

"Just one minute left," said Peggy, looking at her watch. "Thank God, we are in time."

Wooten hoisted Peggy's handkerchief on the end of a stick he had picked up.

"Wave it Billy! Wave it!" she shouted enthusiastically.

She snatched the stars and stripes from the ground where Wooten had laid the flag while he helped Peggy up the side of the cliff.

Frantically she waved it, as Wooten held the flag of surrender high above his head.

Looking from the valley below, everyone could see them. Doctor Weston had anticipated Peggy's intentions when she disappeared from Cliff Anderson's. He had gone to the church and was watching from the tower where the chime of bells hung.

Lieutenant Johnson was also watching through his field glasses. When he saw Wooten waving the white flag, and Peggy the Stars and Stripes, his glasses seemed to blur, and he grumbled that "the thing needed cleaning." He took out his handkerchief for the purpose, but his orderly, afterward, in telling about it, said the Lieutenant wiped his eyes.

"Fire a salute to the best American I ever saw," he commanded.

As the gun boomed a salute to Peggy and the American flag, Doctor Weston rang the chimes:

"My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing"

mingled with the echo of the guns.

Looking at the slight form of Peggy, joyously waving her flag, he said:

"She is as high above me as the heaven is above the earth. If I can overtake her in a million years my soul will be satisfied."

CHAPTER NINETEEN

CLIFF ANDERSON ENTERS POLITICS

AFTER the surrender of the draft evaders it was necessary for Lieutenant Johnson and his men to remain for a month in the mountains, aiding the civil authorities in hunting out slackers secreting themselves in the sparsely settled communities.

At Peggy's solicitation, the soldiers went into quarters in Bucks Pocket near the Peggy Ware School, and Peggy organized a special course of instruction for all the draft evaders that would take advantage of it. They were given intensive military instruction, for the cry was coming over from France for help, and the Government had planned to send relief as quickly as possible. So it was arranged that the men should attend school at night. Their enthusiasm was remarkable once they had taken a few lessons.

It was Peggy's purpose to teach them to spell, read, and write; and it was not long until every man could write his name. Their progress was much more rapid than that made by the men and women in Peggy's school for the illiterates. These were people past middle life, some of them seventy, and their progress had been painfully slow. The draft dodgers were all young men, with strong native intellect, and at the end of the month they had acquired a thirst for education that would insure a continuance of their studies.

Peggy talked to them on the duties of citizenship. She impressed on them the greatness of our form of

Government, and showed them the blessed privilege of being an American citizen. She told them that the best citizenship also meant a love of God, for good citizenship, she said, called for the surrender of many natural rights that belonged to man in a purely animal state.

"I want you to always remember," she said, "that you are living souls, and that as such you are sons of God and brothers to all mankind. A proper recognition of this great truth will make you better soldiers and better citizens. Good citizenship in its last analysis means the love of God and service to our fellow man."

When the men were bidding her goodbye, she urged them to write to their mothers.

"If it is only a scrap of paper on which you write your name and say, 'Mother, I am thinking of you,' don't fail, boys, for you will never know what it will mean to her."

"I ain't got no mother, Miss Peggy," said Billy Wooten, sadly. "My daddy and mammy died when I wus a little feller, an' I never had no brothers or sisters. I ain't even got a sweetheart," he said shyly, "so if anything happens to me it won't make no difference."

In spite of his brave efforts, Peggy saw the tears in his eyes.

"There is someone that would care, Billy," said Peggy, as she held his hand in hers. "It would wring my heart if you did not come back, and I shall pray every day for your safe return."

"You don't meant it, do you?" said he. "I didn't 'spose you'd ever think of me agin."

"At a certain hour every day, I'll think of you and pray for you, and I want you to write to me."

"It won't be much writin', Miss Peggy. Ef you'll

write yore name on a piece of paper, so I kin look at it when I go to write, it'll help me out about the spell-in'. I think I kin manage to write my name."

A new light had come into his eyes, and the big mountain boy marched away with a firm step and light heart.

* * * * *

Winslow and Cranston were working with a will on their masterpiece. They had filmed the soldiers and the slackers. They were enthusiastic over the scene showing the surrender. They told Peggy that her services would come to the notice of the authorities, and that she would be given signal recognition for her patriotic action.

"I hope there will be no publicity," she said. "I don't want anyone to think that these splendid young mountaineers were afraid to fight. All I did was to put it before them in the proper light. When I did so, they were eager to go. Anyone could have done this just as well as I did. I predict that they will make a record in France to be proud of.

Wilbur Ware had not been idle. Following out the plans already approved by Peggy, he had gone into a number of communities, called the people together, and laid before them the proposition for the establishment of a Community Center.

Although the people were at first a little slow and skeptical, he had gradually won them over, until now there were twenty houses complete in as many communities. In some of these communities he had found as many as four church houses, and in most of them at least two. These represented as many different denominations, differing on some point of theological dogma, "doctrinal pints," as expressed in the mountain vernacular.

For the most part, these church houses were falling into decay. The windows were broken out, the steeples either toppled over or threatening to fall, while the dust of years had accumulated on the floor, benches and pulpits. The fierce theological strife had stifled all spiritual growth, and at last the congregations had diminished until there was no one left to pay the theologians, and they had departed to other fields.

The churches were usually close together, on opposite sides of the road, perhaps, but close enough so each congregation could see what its "rival" was doing.

In only one thing could they agree—that was in having a common burial plot called the "graveyard."

When Father Time mowed them down, open communion and close communion, infant baptism and infant damnation, immersion and sprinkling were all forgotten, and they mingled their tears burying their dead side by side, the saint and the sinner, to await the judgment day when they should come forth from their graves, the saints to be caught up into everlasting glory, while the sinners would be cast with all other goats into outer darkness.

These graveyards reflected the religious thought of the community. They were desolate beyond the power of human language to describe. Overgrown with briars and broom sage, the mounds heaped above the graves sinking lower and lower as the years went by, until you could almost touch the rotting pine board coffin in which the poor skeleton rested.

It was no wonder that the dwellers in these communities who had never heard any but "doctrinal" sermons, who never came to their graveyards except to lay a friend or loved one beneath the desolate sod, had drifted away from the churches. A religion of

gloom, of bickering, of materialism, had done its work, and Wilbur Ware found the unmistakable evidence in almost every community.

In the twenty communities selected by him there had been a resurrection. The dead ones, who were "walking about to save funeral expenses," in the picturesque language of Cliff Anderson, had been galvanized into life.

The old church houses had been torn down where that was feasible and used in the construction of Community Center houses. These served for church, Sunday School, social gatherings, for picture shows and other forms of educational entertainment.

The plans had been so drawn that the main building could be thrown into smaller rooms. These served as school rooms for the primary schools until such time as a suitable school building could be erected. When more lumber was needed than provided by tearing down the churches, the men of the communities had banded together, cut the pine trees, hauled them to the nearest saw mill, furnishing all the lumber required.

From the nearby towns of Chattanooga, Nashville, Birmingham, Atlanta, and many others came donations of hardware, doors, and windows, and the necessary cash for the purchase of seats, and to meet all other requirements.

A friendly rivalry sprang up, and each community tried to outvie the other in the early completion of its building.

The graveyards were cleared off, flowers planted, and they became beauty spots, rather than haunts of desolation.

Peggy's motion-picture circuit now consisted of twenty houses, and she, Winslow and Cranston talked

enthusiastically of the day when there would be hundreds of places where pictures with a soul would be exhibited.

Doctor Weston had given all the time to aiding in the establishment of the Community Centers he could spare from his work with the "lonesome" people.

Cliff Anderson's life was a busy one, for he was the "big boss" of the farming and industrial work.

Ruth was to remain in the Anderson home until her marriage to Doctor Weston. She would always retain the name of Ruth, given her by Molly Anderson. She had been told every detail of the story of her abduction by the gypsies, and her rescue by Cliff Anderson. She had also learned that another child, a girl, of the same age, was stolen at the same time and had never been recovered. This gave her much concern. She brooded over it until it became an obsession with her.

"How can I be sure who I am?" she would ask her betrothed. "Perhaps I am the other girl. I want to know my parentage for a certainty."

Old Simon often tried to comfort and assure her. "Chil', they ain't no sort ob question erbout it. In de fust place you is de zact image of Young Missus. You kin see dat fer yoreself when you looks at her picter. Den you'se a Lee. Dey ain't no bettah blood in de Souf, an' you shows youah quality ebery time you turns aroun'."

Cliff Anderson was now confronted with the problem that he had been fearing. Peggy was insistent that he make the race for the Legislature, and he must make up his mind.

"I'd ruther be in France with them Germans shootin' at me an' gassin' me all at onct," he told Peggy. "They's jest one human bein' in the world that I'd do it

fer, an' ef you insist, I'll give that little pecker-wood lawyer the durndest fight he ever had."

The momentous question was settled, and with his usual energy Cliff Anderson entered the race for the lower house of the General Assembly, on a platform advocating an appropriation of ten thousand dollars a year for the Peggy Ware School.

A mighty howl went up from the cross-roads politicians, and Amos Fuller, who up to this time had no opposition, promptly challenged Anderson to a joint discussion, knowing that he would make short work of him and his issue.

"I've been a-feard of this jint-discussion," he told Peggy. "You know they are pow'ful pop'lar with we Southern people, an' ef I back down they'll call me a coward an' then I will shore git beat. So I'm gwine to rassel with the little bumble bee. But you must be at the fust speakin', Miss Peggy, becace it will help me pow'ful when I git the 'buck aguer,' to see you thare a-backin' me up. I think you better pray fer me too, becace I'm gwine to need all the help I kin git. You might help me out on my grammar a little, ef I git too bad balled up."

"Your grammar is all right, Mr. Anderson," Peggy assured him. "Don't think about your grammar, just put your whole heart in what you say, and the Lord will inspire you to say the proper thing."

"Wall, ef he don't, I'm a-feard I won't say much, an' ef that Amos Fuller gits to makin' game of me, an' I can't beat him talkin', I recon I kin lick him."

Peggy laughed at the latter remark. "You will lick him with his own weapons, never fear," Peggy assured him, and the old man felt considerably relieved.

The first meeting was to be at Flat Rock, where one of the Community Center churches had been built.

Fuller had demanded the right to open and close the discussion, expecting in his closing speech to put Anderson to an ignominious flight. Anderson readily agreed to the division of time.

"I kin tell all I know in one speech," he said, "an' it won't be very long at that. When I git through, you kin talk 'til everybody gits tired and leaves, if you want to."

The great day arrived and the crowd taxed the capacity of the house. Peggy, her father, Ruth, Molly Anderson, and Doctor Weston occupied seats in the "Amen corner."

The chairman of the meeting announced the terms of the debate, and introduced the Honorable Amos Fuller, the present faithful representative of the county in the Legislature, seeking a re-election. There was much hand-clapping, and the honorable gentleman felt greatly flattered.

After complimenting everybody in general, and the ladies in particular, he proceeded to flay Anderson alive.

"My **honorable** opponent," he shouted, laying great stress on "honorable," "asks you to replace a faithful servant by electing him. When he asks you to do this unusual thing he puts himself up as a target to be shot at, and I propose to fill his character so full of holes that it won't hold shucks."

"Hurrah for Fuller! Give it to the old scoundrel, Amos," was shouted by a few of his henchmen.

"No, fellow citizens," he continued, warming up to his subject, "I won't fill his character with holes, I'll just rub the whitewash off so you can see them."

Much laughter greeted this sally of the speaker.

"Cliff Anderson, the King of the Wild Catters! How would that sound in the halls of your Legislature?"

He has made enough wildcat liquor to float a battleship in, and sold it for filthy lucre, debauching the noble youths of our land."

The speaker was quite overcome by his emotions, reached for the handkerchief in his hip pocket, and dried his eyes.

"Pardon me for this momentary exhibition of weakness, fellow citizens, but the evils of whiskey are so great that I can never discuss the subject without yielding to those emotions that I am sure fill every heart here except the reprobate heart of this old wild catter, who claims that he has reformed, after he got all the money he needs, and stands with one foot in the grave.

"That ain't the worst of it," shouted the thoroughly excited gentleman. "He is a thief! and I can prove it."

"Hit 'im, Cliff! hit 'im!" some of Anderson's old friends urged, while others jeered, saying, "We allus knowed he was crooked."

"Prove it! Prove it!" persisted the Fuller claquers.

"All right, I'll do it. He stole that young lady there when she was just two years old," pointing a long, bony finger at Ruth. "If it ain't so, stand up and deny it, Cliff Anderson!" he fairly hissed in Anderson's ear, standing on tiptoe, leaning far over, with his finger almost touching the tip of Anderson's nose.

It was a moment of breathless suspense.

Anderson was known far and wide as a dangerous fighting man, and everyone expected that he would fell his antagonist with one blow of his powerful fist. He did not stir; the muscles of his face twitched convulsively, he gripped the edge of the chair on which he sat with both hands, and Peggy caught the glimpse of an angry tear stealing down his cheek.

"Your time is up, Mr. Fuller," warned the chairman.

"I thank you, ladies and gentlemen," he obsequiously observed. "I hope you will remain and hear my rejoinder."

He sat down much pleased with himself, while the crowd clapped their hands, stamping the floor with their feet.

"Ladies and gentlemen, this is Cliff Anderson," said the chairman. "He will speak for himself."

Slowly the old man rose, and his knees were trembling violently. The perspiration stood in beads on his forehead, and he was forced to use his handkerchief frequently. His voice was husky, his hands were in his way, while his feet were at least twice their usual size.

A pitcher of water and a glass stood on a small table. He seized the pitcher to pour out a drink of water, but in his excitement he placed it to his lips, took a long swallow, and set it down. The crowd roared, adding greatly to his confusion.

"That's the way he used to take his liquor," said Fuller, derisively. The uproar increased at this fresh display of wit on the part of his opponent.

"And that's where you told a lie," said Anderson, looking squarely into the shifting eyes of the lawyer.

"You had better be careful about who you call a liar, Mr. Anderson," weakly protested his opponent.

"Oh, I'll be keeful enough," responded Anderson. "Don't worry. I never took a drink of licker in my life. I allus made it fer fools like you to drink, Mr. Fuller."

"I don't drink, Anderson. Everybody knows I'm a prohibitionist," said the lawyer, looking about sheepishly.

"He said I'd made enough whiskey to float a battleship in, an' mebbe I have. I've sold him enough to

tau his hide in, if he was as big as—as an elephant. An' the wust part of it is he ain't paid me fer it, an' when I threatened to sue him he said he would plead the statute of limitations!"

"Hear! Hear! Hurrah for the old tiger!" and kindred exclamations of encouragement greeted the speaker.

"He's a prohibitionist all right, but he wants to prohibit the other fellow from getting lickier by drinking it all himself, and then prohibit the man that sold it to him from collecting his money. Yes, he's a double-dyed, double-crossed sort of prohibitionist.

"He's got a bottle of whiskey in his inside coat pocket this very minute, fellow citizens."

"You're a liar, Cliff Anderson. If I have, I'll quit this race."

"All right, Mr. Fuller; let me search you."

"Don't touch me, Anderson. I don't allow any man to lay his hands on me." He reached toward his pistol pocket, and the audience began to scramble for the door.

"Keep your seats, folks," commanded Anderson, "he's never shot anybody yet but himself. I've seen him half shot many a time."

Anderson clasped the angry man around the shoulders with his left arm, holding him like a vice, while with his right hand he threw back the lappel of Fuller's coat, exposing the neck of a bottle.

"Here she is, fellow citizens," he said, gleefully, as he extracted the bottle from the pocket of the squirming lawyer. "I'll pour it out in this glass, so's you all can smell it. It ain't good, like I used to make," he said. "I guess it's got pine tops and buckeye in it, for it stinks like a polecat."

Pandemonium broke loose. Anderson released his opponent, who grabbed his hat and made a bee-line for the door. "I refuse to listen further to the harangue of a blackguard," he shouted angrily, as he made his exit, followed by the hoots and jeers of the entire audience, except his henchmen. One by one they stole out to join their fallen chieftain on the outside.

When order had been restored, Anderson went on:

"When he stooped over to pint his finger in my face," he said, "I saw the neck of his bottle, on his inside coat pocket, and I knowed I had him.

"I'm now gwine to tell you about stealin' the child, and I ain't gwine to deny it. I'll tell you how it wus."

In simple language, he told his audience of his fight with the two gypsies for the possession of Ruth, of his race to the steamboat landing to evade the revenue officers, and the subsequent events leading up to the present moment.

"She is here," he said, "and so are her father, sister and husband that's goin' to be. Ef they are all fer me, I want 'em to stan' up."

"We are all for you," they said in unison, as they rose to their feet.

"Now everybody that feels the same way, please rise," he said. Everyone stood up amidst the greatest enthusiasm.

"Now, I am goin' to talk about the issue for a few minutes, for I want all of you to know why you are voting for me."

Briefly he explained the aims of the Peggy Ware School, and told of what had already been accomplished.

"About a dozen of your boys and gals are down there at school now, and we want that many more next year, but in order to take care of them we need more money. I think the State ought to give it to

us, because every dollar goes for your kids, and it's your money. So why not give it to them?"

The meeting was over and everybody wanted to shake the speaker's hand and give assurance of support. He scarcely seemed to hear or see anyone. He was waiting the approval of the one whose sympathetic hand-clasp meant more to him than the plaudits of the world.

"Nobly done, Mr. Anderson. It was the grandest speech I ever heard. I am proud of you!" Peggy held out her two hands and took Anderson's big right hand between them. He felt the thrill that came from her understanding heart.

"It's all right now, Miss Peggy," he said. "I don't want to go to France. I'm going to the Legislature."

There were no more joint discussions after the first meeting. Fuller conducted a "gum shoe" campaign, telling the people that it was beneath his dignity to recognize an ignorant old wild catter by engaging in a public controversy with him.

Anderson continued to tell the people in a straightforward, simple way the things that he advocated.

Election day finally arrived with a sweeping victory for Cliff Anderson and the Peggy Ware School.

A telephone line had been installed from the county seat to Bucks Pocket, and as the returns kept piling up Anderson's majority, there was great rejoicing. Only Cliff Anderson seemed depressed.

"You don't seem to be happy over the result, Mr. Anderson," said Peggy. "Don't you think it a glorious victory?"

"That's what pesters me, Miss Peggy," he replied gloomily. "It is a big thing for the Peggy Ware School, if I can put our bill through in the Legisla-

ture. It's a pow'ful big load fer me to tote, and I know I ain't competent."

"When I get down to Montgomery, amongst all them educated guys, most of them slick lawyers, I'm a-feard they'll jest laugh my bill out of countenance. I know they'll make all manner of fun of me, but I can stand that, if they will jest pass our appropriation."

He had come up to Peggy's Shrine of Silence, which he had never entered, always standing outside the door, with head bared, while talking to Peggy. When invited to enter, he would say: "No, I ain't fitten."

This time he had entered, and was seated near a window from which he could obtain a marvelous view of the Tennessee river and its broad valley, with the blue mountain ranges in the distance.

"It's the most peaceullest feelin' I ever had in my life," said he, "as I set here, lookin' out at them mountains beyond the river. Why, I've most lost all fear of them fellers down at Montgomery. What is it makes me have this feelin', Miss Peggy?"

"Mr. Anderson," she said, "it is because I have never had a thought in this room except of absolute faith in God. Thoughts are the most potential forces in the world, and this Shrine of Silence, as I am pleased to call it, is filled with thoughts of love, peace, joy, faith. It is here that I meet God face to face, just as surely as I shall ever meet Him in all the eternity yet to come, and today is just as much a part of eternity as any other day will ever be.

"So I live in this thought in this room, and it is here I get the strength and wisdom for my work. If we will allow Him, God will fill us with His wisdom at all times, and we never need be at a loss as to the course to pursue."

"That's what you call prayin', ain't it, Miss Peggy?" asked Anderson, looking earnestly at her, "prayin' without talkin'?"

"That's the only kind of prayin' I could do, fer I ain't edycated well enough to talk to God. I've heard them long-winded prayers whare the feller 'would holler so loud you could a-heard him at least a mile, an' I allus said it warn't half loud enough fer God to hear, or it wus so loud, an' so many of 'em yellin' at the same time that He would stop His ears."

"You don't need to talk to God in words," said Peggy. "God is a spirit, and we worship Him in spirit. Do you understand that, Mr. Anderson?"

"You mean that God ain't jest a big man, but is somethin' I feel inside sometimes when I'm thinkin' of all the good things that's been done here in Bucks Pocket? Ef that's what you mean, then I think I know what prayin' is. I heerd you say once to the boys and gals that 'prayer is the soul's sincere desire.' I been turnin' that over in my mind ever sence, an' ef that's prayin', I'm doin' my best."

"That's what I mean, Mr. Anderson. You understand it, and your life is showing the fruit of your understanding."

"You have nothing to fear when you go to Montgomery. If it is right for the school to have this appropriation, your bill will pass. If the money ought to come from some other source, then good and well. We know that we shall get it. We do our part when we walk in the light as we see it, and use the means at hand to accomplish our ends."

"I'm goin' in that faith, Miss Peggy," said the big man, as he arose to take his departure, an' ef it's God's will, I'll bring home the bacon."

* * * * *

The "bringing home of the bacon" was not accomplished without much difficulty, and furnishes one of the many interesting episodes of the early history of the Peggy Ware School.

Cliff Anderson's appearance on the floor of the lower house of the legislative body was quite an event. He was the only ex-Confederate soldier, and, so far as known, the only ex-wild catter.

Prohibition was a burning issue, and practically the entire body had been elected on a radical prohibition platform. Anderson had not defined his position in his campaign. When pressed for his views, his answer invariably was that no whiskey was made or drunk in Bucks Pocket, and if this fact did not speak for him, it would be useless to make any assertions as to what he thought about the evils of whiskey.

Anderson still clung to his "home-spun" clothes, and when he appeared at the speaker's desk to take the oath of office, he was attired in a suit of gray jeans, woven and fashioned by his wife. A woolen shirt with a soft turn-down collar, a big black bow tie, high boots, in which his trousers were stuffed, and a broad-brimmed, soft hat completed his outfit.

"Who is the big guy, still wearing home-made clothes?" was whispered through the galleries.

"An old wild catter from the mountains of North Alabama," some one volunteered, and it was passed along until every one was duly informed.

The speaker of the house was friendly to Anderson. He had visited the Peggy Ware School, and was favorable to the appropriation, but being a shrewd politician, he kept this to himself. He had the highest esteem for Anderson, because his father and Anderson had both fought under Lee, and Anderson had rendered his mother a service at the close of the war.

He also understood the Governor's views, and it was through the speaker's influence that Anderson's bill was reported out of the committee that had it in charge. The report was a unanimous one against the bill, but it gave Anderson an opportunity to get his measure before the house. The speaker had told the committee that this doubtless would be the end of the matter, but it would please the old man and do no harm.

When the bill was reported, the speaker politely turned to Anderson and asked him if he desired to discuss the measure, informing him that he would have the right to open and close the debate.

Laboring under great embarrassment, Anderson seemed unable to find himself. His effort was a failure, and he felt it more keenly than anyone.

As two hours had been set apart for the discussion of the bill, and the author had consumed but ten minutes, some of the younger members who had not had an opportunity to air their eloquence, took occasion to poke fun at Anderson and his measure. One of them even chided him as being a friend of whiskey. Another said that he was a Rip Van Winkle, living in a past age, still wearing the gray home-made jeans of fifty years ago.

"We have public schools for the education of the boys and girls," he said, "and we don't need this Peggy Ware School, with a slip of a girl as its president, and a whole lot of new fangled ideas about education, religion, and Heaven knows what else."

Cliff Anderson had sat through the ridicule and misrepresentation unmoved, outwardly; sometimes his eyes were closed, and a look of peace radiated from his features.

"Do you desire to say anything further before the

vote is taken," kindly inquired the speaker, as he looked pityingly at the old veteran.

To the surprise of everyone, another Cliff Anderson stood in their midst. He was no longer awkward or embarrassed. His voice was strong and resonant. His first sentence electrified his hearers. "I've faced a thousand Yankee guns on the battlefield," he said, "and I never dodged a bullet or run a step, an' I don't know why I should be skeered at all you fellers because you are edycated and got on store clothes. Take yore book larnin' away frum you, and take off yore clothes, an' I wouldn't be a-feard of the whole bunch.

"I'm here to talk fur the folks that ain't got no edycation or store clothes either, an' I'm going to talk to you, jest man to man, fer I am yore equal in everything that God can give a man. What I want is to make our mountain boys and gals the equal with yours in them things that God don't give people.

"They ain't no better blood in the world than we've got up in the mountains. They ain't no purer women or braver men, but they ain't had no chance.

"There are more than half the men and women that can't write their names, and the boys and gals, lots of them, are growin' up the same way.

"The only schools that amount to anything are in the towns and big settlements, and that don't reach places like Bucks Pocket. There are thousands of boys and gals in our mountains that won't never see inside a school house, if they don't go to the Peggy Ware School.

"What Peggy Ware has already done is worth more than all the money the Legislature would give it if it appropriated every year for a hundred years the amount I ask in this bill. If you could see the change in Bucks Pocket, and our mountain country, where Peggy

Ware's influence has been felt, you would vote unanimously for my bill.

"Somethin' was said about whiskey, an' I want to tell you what Peggy Ware has done for Bucks Pocket. I reckon it used to be the wust place fer wildcat lickin' in the State, an' that's about all we had there—wildcat whiskey and hell.

"They ain't a drop in ten miles of Bucks Pocket, an' ef a man brought a bottle into the community, he would be disgraced. It's all due to Peggy Ware, too. She ain't never preached prohibition. I never heard her say prohibition in my life. She jest teaches what she calls right thinkin', clean thinkin', and clean livin'. I can't explain it to you like she could, but I know it's cleaned out Bucks Pocket, and it's the most peaceful, law abiding community in the State.

"One gentleman said that Miss Peggy had new fangled ideas, but if they work everywhere like they do in Bucks Pocket, I think it would be a good thing to spread the doctrine. This is jest what we are aimin' to do up thare. Spread it all over the mountains of our beloved South, and mebbe it will drift down into the towns and cities."

As Anderson warmed to his subject, he towered like one of the peaks of his own mountains. One member, nudged another and whispered: 'He looks like a cliff, don't he? His name is quite appropriate.'

He was winning his way with the members, and it was evident that many had been won over to his support, while others were on the fence.

The speaker of the house, who had watched the change in sentiment wrought by Anderson's earnestness, now determined to throw the weight of his influence on the side of the Peggy Ware School.

"I am going to ask the gentleman to occupy the

speaker's chair while I address the house," he said, beckoning Anderson to come forward.

Anderson stood as if he were incapable of either speech or motion, until the speaker stepped from the stand, took the old man firmly by the arm and almost dragged him to the speaker's chair. There was loud hand-clapping and cries of "Hurrah for Anderson!"

"I want to pay a tribute to this gallant old Confederate soldier," said the speaker. "He and my father were both with Lee in Virginia, and my father fell mortally wounded the day before Lee's surrender to Grant.

"Mr. Anderson belonged to the infantry, and my father to the cavalry, so Anderson owned no horse. He took charge of my father's horse, brought it to Alabama down to the black belt, where my mother lived, turned it over to her, and then walked back to his home in the mountains of North Alabama, a distance of over two hundred miles, and he was barefooted. I plowed with the horse and made a crop and kept the family from starving.

"Mr. Anderson might have kept the horse. No one would ever have known it, and made a crop for his own widowed mother. Instead of doing that, he plowed with an ox, and I want to say that no more gallant soldier ever wore the Confederate uniform than Cliff Anderson; and today I honor him and the gray homespun suit he wears, and I am going to show my respect and appreciation in a small way by voting for his bill.

"I have visited the Peggy Ware School. I have talked to Peggy Ware, and I unhesitatingly state that in my humble judgment, hers is the greatest institution of its kind in the South, and that she is the finest, noblest Christian young woman I have ever met."

The opposition vanished, the vote for the bill was

practically unanimous, and Cliff Anderson was the beau ideal of the Legislature.

When the governor signed the bill, Anderson said: "Let me take the pen with which you signed your name to Miss Peggy. I am sure she'll frame it and put it in her Shrine of Silence."

"I want to congratulate you, Cliff Anderson," said the governor cordially. "I knew you had the right mettle when I urged you to make the race for the Legislature. I wish every community had a Peggy Ware and a Cliff Anderson. What a transformation we would witness."

"It's all Miss Peggy, governor. I'd a still been makin' wildcat lick'er ef God hadn't sent her to Bucks Pocket."

"I'm sorry you are not a prohibitionist, Anderson," said the governor, winking slyly at his secretary. "That's all you lack of being admitted into the inner circle."

"Wall, governor, I hated them revenoo officers so long I guess I can't jest make up my mind to run with the gang. I don't ever think I'll feel right amongst all them saints and near-saints. I'll jest stay out with the goats and help along with the Peggy Ware School, where the boys and gals are not taught 'don't,' but 'do.' There ain't a motto on the walls that says 'thou shalt not,' but everyone reads 'thou shalt.' If you get enough of 'thou shalt' in a fellow's hide, there ain't no room for 'white lightnin', an' he ain't got no taste for it either."

"You know, governor, my county was the first one in the State to adopt prohibition. That was forty years ago. I just got my home paper today, containing a report of the grand jury. I want you to read it."

There were several members of the Legislature gathered in the governor's office to witness the signing

of Anderson's bill. To them the governor read the grand jury report:

"We have endeavored to make an extensive and thorough investigation of the violation of the prohibition laws in this county, in keeping with your honor's charge. We find that there are illicit distilleries in almost every community in the county, some of them located almost in the shadow of the schools and churches of the county, and we further find that many citizens of this county who have heretofore enjoyed the confidence and the respect of the law-abiding people are now engaged in distilling or are lending their aid, directly or indirectly, to those who are violating the prohibition laws. We find that many distillers and bootleggers are selling whiskey to the boys over the country, some of whom are almost children in knee trousers. We further find prohibited liquors being transported over the county, not by quarts and gallons, but by barrels, and we have discovered in more than one instance where it has been stored in large quantities. We have had many men before the grand jury who pose as being good, law-abiding citizens, who we have every reason to believe and know testified falsely for the purpose of protecting distillers and bootleggers. We have heard and seen enough during our investigations this week to know that the county is in a most deplorable condition. We find that men who have enjoyed public trust are using their automobiles and other conveyances in transporting whiskey over the county."

"Ef that's the condition after forty years of bone dry prohibition, don't you think, Governor, that the Peggy Ware plan is worth tryin'?" said Anderson earnestly. "I ain't agin prohibition, but I'm fur prevention. The only dry spot in our county is Bucks

Pocket, an' nobody ain't never made a prohibition speech thare. Our boys an' gals wouldn't tech the stuff any more than they would pizen."

"After all, Anderson, I think you are a pretty good sort of prohibitionist," said the Governor. "Goodbye and God bless you."

"I recon' you might call me a preventionist," said Anderson as he took leave of the Governor.

CHAPTER TWENTY

PEGGY GOES TO WASHINGTON

THE filming of "Peggy Ware" had been completed, the cutting and sub-titling was done, and after several showings in the projection room, it had been pronounced perfect. Winslow and Cranston regarded it as their masterpiece. It had been run in all the Community Center houses, and everywhere had aroused the greatest enthusiasm. They were now anxious to submit it to the supreme test, the verdict of the public.

After spending some time in New York and Washington, Winslow and Cranston finally determined to give "Peggy Ware" its premiere exhibition in one of the largest motion picture houses in the capitol city of the Nation. This conclusion was partially induced by reason of the fact that the President had written Peggy, expressing his appreciation of the patriotic services she had rendered her country in ending the slacker war in Bucks Pocket without bloodshed.

He further stated that he had asked to be informed of the record of these men in France, and was pleased to know that there were no better soldiers serving overseas.

He expressed the keenest interest in the Peggy Ware School, and promised his assistance in any way possible. The letter ended with a pressing invitation to Peggy to visit the capitol as the guest of the White House.

Winslow and Cranston, keenly alive to the publicity value of the patronage of the President, arranged for a private showing of their picture at which the President's private secretary was present. His report was so favorable that the President consented to be present at its first exhibition, if Peggy would also attend as his guest.

When this news was carried to Bucks Pocket, it was the cause of intense excitement. The newspapers published in Washington arrived in a few days filled with wonderful stories of the Peggy Ware School.

Peggy was written up one side and down the other, her story so embellished by the imagination of the gifted reporters who had built a fairy structure on a very simple foundation, that she wanted to decline the invitation to the White House, and upset the entire plans of her managers.

She told her father, Anderson, and Doctor Weston that she did not want publicity for herself, and that she shrank from going to Washington under the false glamour created by the newspaper stories.

"I don't think the newspapers have overdrawn the story at all," said Doctor Weston. "You don't realize, Peggy, what an unusual woman you are, and what a romantic life yours has been. In all the realms of fiction there is nothing that surpasses it. I wish you could see it as I do."

"It all seems so simple to me, Doctor Weston, that I don't want any great to-do about it. I have done no more than any other girl with the same opportunities could have done, and this is the big fact that I want to keep to the fore. I don't want this lost sight of in the glamour of the glorification of Peggy Ware. You know that all I have done was to use the forces

that are available to every soul, and this is my message to the world."

"Don't you think Washington City will be a good place to deliver that message, Peggy?" asked her father. "That is where the heart of the nation beats, and you will have an opportunity to get your message over where it will do the most good."

"You kin tell 'em fer me," said Cliff Anderson, "that when the reporters have wrote everything about you and the Peggy Ware School, they kin think of, they ain't teched sides nor bottom of what you're doin'. Ef I was writin' it, I'd say that the story can't be finished until Gabe blows his trumpet, becace this work is goin' on 'til then.

"I wus out in the center of the mill pond tother day, settin' on a log fishin', an' I dropped a rock in the water, an' it started a wave in a circle, an' it kept gittin' bigger an' bigger until it hit the bank on both sides of the creek. An' I said that's jes like the work bein' done here; it will jest keep on a spreadin' until it strikes the shores of Heaven."

"That's a very beautiful thought, Mr. Anderson," said Peggy, "if they would leave me out of it, don't you understand."

"Yes, Miss Peggy, I think I understand better than you do. You are the one that dropped the rock in the pond that started the wave, an' ef you hadn't done it, there wouldn't a been no wave to talk about or write about. So it's perfectly natural that everybody wants to know all about the feller that started it, and when that 'feller' is a beautiful young lady, the story gits pow'ful interestin'."

"An' when she's as good as she's purty," chimed in Simon, "it's no wondah de President wants her to come to de White House."

"How wonderful it will be, Peggy. I almost envy you. Of course, I couldn't do it, because you are the only girl in the world that could live up to the part," enthusiastically declared Ruth.

"I am afraid I cannot, Ruth. I am terribly frightened this minute, and don't know what I will do when I get to Washington. You know I have never been anywhere, and I'm afraid I won't know how to act or what to say."

"Don't you remember the sermon you preached to me when I had to go down to Montgomery to the Legislature?" asked Anderson. "How you told me God would inspire me? I recon' He did, becace I got our bill through, an' ef He would help an old sinner like me out, I know He won't desert an angel like you."

"Oh, Peggy, you always do the right thing and say the right thing and you'll be the sweetest, purtiest girl in Washington, and all the young men will be fallin' in love with you an' wantin' to marry you," said Molly Anderson with a motherly pride in her eyes.

"Yes, and I'll wager that she'll be getting married and bringing her fine, handsome husband home with her one of these days," said Ruth, thinking of her own happiness and approaching nuptials.

A look of pain swept over Peggy's face, observed by no one except Doctor Weston and Simon. In that one glimpse the faithful old negro read the tragic story buried in Peggy's heart. Henceforth he would carry her cross on his shoulders, and suffer in his own soul every pang she felt.

It was finally settled that Peggy should go to Washington. The great day for her departure arrived, and the entire population turned out to wish her Godspeed. As Ruth kissed her goodbye, she whispered:

"Remember my wedding day, and don't get so absorbed in the pleasures of Washington society that you will overstay your time."

As Peggy stepped in the automobile waiting to take her to the railroad, the postman handed her a special delivery letter, bearing a French postmark.

"It's from Billy Wooten, I hope, and I'll have the pleasure of reading it on the train," she said.

Once more Peggy ascended the mountain road leading from Bucks Pocket just as the sun rose. She remembered when she, Anderson and his wife had made the trip to the County Seat town in Anderson's new buggy, over an almost impassable road for a part of the way. Now it was a splendid boulevard, bordered with roses for the entire distance.

Her train would arrive at the station at nine o'clock, and was due in Washington the next morning at seven o'clock.

She would not read the letter from France until she was comfortably settled on the train. Then she could enjoy it to the fullest extent.

Seated in the Pullman berth reserved for her to Washington, she listened to the click-click of the revolving wheels, giving herself up to the luxurious feeling of nothing to do, and nothing to think about for twenty-four hours, except to follow where fancy led.

When she had enjoyed the sensation for a little while, she took her letter with the French postmark on it from her traveling bag, and slowly opened it. At first glance her hand began to tremble, her face blanched, and when she finished, the letter slipped from her fingers. She buried her face in her hands, sobbing like a heart-broken child.

By and by the storm subsided. She groped on the floor and found the letter, placed it in her bosom, and

turned her tear-stained face toward the window from which she could see historic Lookout Mountain on the East. Thus she sat through the long day as the train sped through the mountains of Alabama, Tennessee, and North Carolina, her heart heavy within her.

Peggy was not often sad, for she had found the philosopher's stone of happiness, but sometimes the "weakness of the flesh" gets the upper hand of the greatest philosopher, the most advanced soul, and she was human after all.

When night settled down over the lofty peaks of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Peggy sought her berth, her thoughts wandering from her mother's grave in the Cumberland Mountains to her loved ones in Bucks Pocket, and then far over the sea to a lonely grave in France where slept Billy Wooten.

"Washington! All out for Washington!" announced the porter, the next morning as Peggy with wildly beating heart prepared to leave the train.

On the platform she was met by Winslow and Cranston, smiling and happy. "It's the biggest stunt ever pulled off in motion pictures," Cranston announced proudly.

"And you are the biggest sensation in Washington," said Winslow, "not even barring the President."

"Don't, please don't talk like that. I'll regret that I ever came if you are going to try to make a sensation out of me."

"We are not doing it, Miss Ware," said Cranston kindly. "You are a great and unusual woman, and don't realize it. You might as well get used to it, for you are already famous, and you are just at the threshold of your career."

"I know motion picture stars that would give a million dollars for the publicity that you are getting with-

out money, and without solicitation, but they can never have it because they did not lay the foundation as you have done."

"If it must be as you say, and I cannot escape it, then I pray God it will all be for the benefit of the Peggy Ware School and our mountain boys and girls," devoutly declared Peggy.

At the entrance to the station, a swarm of reporters seeking to interview Peggy and a number of camera men anxious for snap shots, awaited her.

"Please don't put me in the papers," she pleaded.

"I know United States Senators that would give up half a year's salary to have this sort of reception," one of the reporters remarked in answer to Peggy's protest.

"We'll treat you fair," said another.

"Gee, she's a beauty," remarked a third, as Peggy, blushing furiously, fled to a waiting taxicab.

"Good-bye, Miss Ware, you have captured the fraternity!" they shouted, as she was whirled away to her hotel, where an elegant suite had been reserved for her.

"This is shameful extravagance, and is entirely out of keeping with my former life and surroundings," she protested as she was ushered into the luxuriously furnished rooms at the New Willard. "I am sure I would be happier back home in my attic room where I could look out of the little window and see the winding Tennessee."

"The die is cast, Miss Ware, and not by you. It is God's will that you should play a big part in this world, and you should be thankful that He has chosen you as His instrument," said Winslow.

"Then let us thank Him," declared Peggy as she closed her eyes and bowed her head in silent prayer.

The great author bowed reverently, his soul filled with an unspeakable joy and peace he had never had a foretaste of until he went to Bucks Pocket.

"Now," he said, "for the joy that comes after labor well done. Accept it to the full, for you have earned it, and you can take back to your beloved mountains what you will find here."

Cranston had well said that Peggy would be the sensation of Washington. Everywhere she went she was the center of attraction.

She put in a wonderful day, visiting the Capitol, the Congressional Library, the art gallery, the Washington monument, Mount Vernon, the home of the Father of his country, and finally the White House, where she was ushered into the presence of the President. He received her so kindly, and was so sincerely simple that Peggy, who thought she would almost die of fright, was soon at her ease.

For half an hour they talked animatedly of Peggy's work in the Southern mountains, when the President announced that she was to take tea at the White House and occupy the Presidential box that night at the premiere showing of "Peggy Ware."

"I shall feel greatly honored, Miss Ware," he said, "by your presence. You are doing such signal service for your country that I am pleased to have the opportunity of publicly showing my appreciation."

Peggy had not given a thought to what she would wear at the White House or to the picture show.

When she saw for the first time in her life fashionably gowned women, she realized that she was attracting far more attention by the simplicity of her dress than she would have done by the most elaborate costume.

"Mr. President," she pleaded, "I am not dressed for

the occasion. I have just realized how perfectly absurd I must appear to everyone. I don't want to embarrass you as well as disgrace myself. Won't you be kind enough to excuse me and let me return to my hotel and catch the first train back to the mountains where I belong?"

"It is your very simplicity, Miss Ware, that adds so immensely to your charms," the President declared enthusiastically. "Your dress is the most becoming that you could possibly wear. When you stand up in my box tonight you will be the envy of every woman in the audience. It will be the climax of the evening's entertainment. Don't allow yourself to be anxious or nervous. You are just like I would have you if you were my own daughter," he said kindly, taking her hands in his.

Reassured by the President's fatherly sympathy, Peggy managed to get through the ordeal of tea at the White House, conscious that everyone except the President regarded her with poorly concealed amusement. His graciousness reassured her from time to time, and kept her from being utterly miserable.

Not until she peeped out from the President's box and scanned Washington's most fashionable audience, did she feel that she must slip away unnoticed, before she became the cynosure for all those hundreds of critical eyes.

She sat huddled in the corner of the box, shrinking back in the shadow, trying to conceal herself behind the President. He addressed her from time to time, trying to reassure her. A hundred opera glasses swept the President's box, searching for Peggy Ware. The afternoon papers had carried the announcement in flowing headlines that she would be the guest of the President and occupy a seat in his box. Peggy felt

herself growing cold. Her hands were clammy, her teeth chattered, her head swam.

"I am ill, Mr. President," she said. "Won't you please send some one with me to my hotel?"

"My dear child, trust me. I know what ails you. I appreciate your feelings, but wait. You are going to be accorded an ovation tonight such as no other American girl ever had under like conditions. It will be an ovation to Peggy Ware, the highest type of American womanhood and not to her beautiful gown and splendid jewels."

Once more Peggy shrank back dejectedly in her corner, while the audience vainly searched the President's box for Peggy Ware.

"It was all a newspaper hoax," one man declared, and soon it was whispered through the audience that Peggy Ware had not arrived. There was great disappointment on the faces of the audience when the curtain rose for the performance, for Washington had been stirred by the thrilling stories of the lass from the mountains of Alabama.

They forgot their disappointment in a little while, however, as the great masterpiece was flashed on the screen. It opened with Christmas eve in the Ware home in the Cumberland mountains, followed by a Christmas tree, Simon acting as Santa Claus. Then came another scene on the same night in Bucks Pocket in the Alabama mountains, a wild dance of the mountaineers in the home of Cliff Anderson, the King of the Wild Catters, winding up in a drunken brawl. The death of Peggy Ware's mother, her burial in the desolate graveyard, Simon speaking the last words, while Wilbur Ware sat scowling, angry with God for taking his wife.

Again Wilbur Ware was shown burning his theo-

logical books, denouncing the ministry, loading his earthly belongings into an ox wagon, starting for the wilds of North Alabama, where the family encountered Cliff Anderson, the King of the Wild Catters.

Then followed the story of the early struggle, the surrender of the King of the Wild Catters, the awakening of the people, the growth of the Peggy Ware School, changing the most lawless spot in Alabama to one of the most progressive and law-abiding.

Finally there came the great climax when the Government sent its soldiers to capture the small army of slackers that had fortified in Bucks Pocket, determined to fight all comers.

Peggy appears in the slacker's camp, and addresses the men. Her words are flashed on the screen: "My country, right or wrong," she says, and the audience broke into enthusiastic applause. The men agree to surrender. She has barely time to reach the top of the peak from which the white flag of surrender is to be waved. She and Billy Wooten, one of the slackers, climb the side of the peak; they reach it with but two minutes to spare. Billy Wooten hoists Peggy's handkerchief on a stick, while Peggy waves the stars and stripes. The cannon booms a salute; the chimes in the Community Church peal out, "My Country, 'tis of thee," the orchestra takes up the refrain, some one rushes to the front of the stage and begins to sing, the audience joins in the mighty anthem, and when the last note is reached, someone shouts: "Three cheers for Peggy Ware!" They were given with a hearty good will, the President standing in his box smiling his approval.

Seizing Peggy firmly by the arm, he said: "You must stand up and bow your acknowledgment, Miss

Ware." Frightened until she scarcely realized what she was doing, Peggy arose mechanically.

"This is Miss Ware," the President announced, as he led her to the front of the box.

The audience was dumbfounded, as it gazed bewildered at the shy, plainly dressed mountain girl, standing speechless, shrinking from the cruel publicity thrust on her. Something like a great sigh of sympathy swept the audience, and then it found its soul.

Wave upon wave of applause swept the great auditorium, one of the largest in the city. "A speech! A speech!" they cried. "Talk to us, Peggy Ware, say something. We want to hear your voice."

"Say something, child," urged the President. "They want to hear you."

Thus urged, Peggy Ware raised her hand to still the tumult. Instantly there was a profound silence. "I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart," she began.

Ah, the music of that voice. No Southern mocking bird ever sang a more liquid note. A thrill ran through the listening audience. They felt something that they could not define.

She had the letter with the French postmark with her. "I want to read you a letter, from France," she said, "about Billy Wooten whom you saw in the picture waving the white flag of truce. It will give you a true insight into the character of our Southern mountaineers. They are very near my heart," she added naively, "for I am one of them.

"This letter is from Lieutenant Johnson, to whom the draft evaders surrendered.

"Dear Miss Ware: I know this will be a sad message for you. It pains me to write it, and yet I am

sure that when you know the whole story, your grief will find some solace.

"When we came over to France I was thrown in the Rainbow Division, and with me were most of your boys, for they always spoke of themselves as belonging to you. Billy Wooten was one of the finest in the lot, and became my orderly. He was always asking me how to spell words, and said he was trying to learn so he could write to you. He could never speak of you without emotion, and I have often seen tears in his eyes as he would tell me how thankful he was that you showed him his duty.

"We had been over the top several times, and Billy was always at my side. He went into battle as lightly as he would have gone on a picnic. I think he was the coolest man I ever saw under fire. I asked him about it once, and his reply was that he had no fear, for if a German bullet got him he would find a beautiful world on the other side. 'Miss Peggy told me so,' he would say, 'and I know it because she said it.'

"Well, we went over the top once too often, and I fell badly wounded. Billy stopped to pick me up. The fire was terrific, and men were dropping like autumn leaves. 'Don't bother about me, Billy,' I said. 'Help rally the men.' 'I hate to leave you, Lieutenant,' he said, 'but you're the boss.' With that he sprang forward and I heard him give the wild rebel yell that you have often heard. 'Come on, men!' he shouted. 'Follow me!'

"I never saw him again until he was brought to the hospital where I lay pretty badly wounded. A glance was sufficient to tell me that his days were numbered. One side of his face was shot away, and his body was

terribly mangled as the result of a shell that exploded right at him. I spoke to him and he said:

“‘I am so glad, Lieutenant, you are here. I was afeard I’d die an’ not get to write to her or send her any word. You know I promised to write when we started over here, an’ now I’m afeard it’s too late. But you’ll write her, won’t you, Lieutenant, and tell her that I died happy thinkin’ of her and of my country. I’m so proud that I had this chance of fightin’ fer Uncle Sam, and I only wish I had a hundred lives. I’d like to give half of them to Him, and half of them to Peggy Ware, fer it was she who showed me what a gran’ Government we have.’

“I promised him that I would write just as soon as I was able to sit up, and he seemed very happy. For a long time he seemed asleep. I thought the end was near, and he would never wake. In a little while, however, he stirred uneasily, and I heard his voice:

“‘Lieutenant,’ he said weakly, ‘don’t you recon’ I could write her just a little bit of a letter. Write her name and sign mine, telling her it wus from me. Don’t you recon’ she would keep it always and look at it sometimes and think of me?’

“I assured him that you would undoubtedly prize it most highly. I called a nurse and explained the situation. She brought pen, ink and paper. She dipped the pen in the ink and placed it in his hand, and showed him where to write.

“Slowly, painfully he began to scrawl the letters. ‘You’ll have to tell me how to spell her name, Lieutenant. She wrote it fer me, but I guess I lost the paper it wus on when that shell blowed me up.’

“I spelled your name for him, very slowly, and he followed with his pen until he had finished.

"‘Now, how can I let her know it’s from me?’ he said.

"Write the word ‘from,’ I told him, and then sign your name."

"‘I reckon you’ll have to spell that ‘from’ fer me, too. I never learned it.’

"I spelled it, and he wrote it.

"‘The rest is easy,’ he said, ‘if I can jest hold out.’

"Quite sure of himself now, he wrote ‘Billy,’ and then started on the last part of the name. He was almost through now. ‘Jest a little more ink, nurse,’ he whispered. ‘Better bring a light; I can’t see.’

"‘I’ll hold your hand at the right place,’ the nurse said gently. Slowly, more slowly, his fingers moved. ‘I am afeard I won’t make it,’ he said. ‘Oh, but I must!’ and he threw his vital breath into the last few strokes. His fingers relaxed, the pen fell from his hand, he closed his eyes, a smile seemed to light that portion of his face not torn away by the shell, and he whispered so weakly that the nurse had to place her ear to his lips to catch it. ‘I tol’ her I’d write her a letter, and I did.’

"We looked again, and the big mountain boy with the heart of a lion and the soul of a woman was still forever."

Again her hand sought the envelope, and she held up the scrap of paper on which was scrawled:

"Miss Peggy Ware
from
Billy Wooten"

"This, ladies and gentlemen, is all the epitaph I desire on my tomb when I have paid the same debt that Billy Wooten paid on Flanders fields. There are thousands of Billy Wootens in the mountains of my be-

loved Southland, and it is one of the missions of the Peggy Ware School to bring the light of education to these boys and girls."

There are times when an audience cannot applaud. There was such an occasion when President Lincoln delivered his now world-famed Gettysburg address.

Only sobs were heard when Peggy sat down. Finally some one said: "The President! The President!"

"I don't want to mar the occasion," said the President, "by any remarks of my own. The lesson we have received tonight in patriotism, in duty, in the joys of self-sacrifice, could not be added to by me. I stand reverently in the presence of this country girl who has shown us the way to the life that is really worth while. She has grasped the true meaning of life where so many of us have missed it.

"She has not been ashamed to acknowledge God, and to live for the things of the soul, rather than the things of the body. When the whole nation learns this vital truth taught by Jesus, and the masters of all the ages, then will the nation find its soul.

"One of our ex-Presidents said not long ago:

"After a certain not very high level of material well-being has been reached, then the things that really count in life are the things of the spirit. Factories and railways are good, up to a certain point; but courage and endurance, love of wife and child, love of home and country, love of lover for sweetheart, love of beauty of man's work and in nature, love and emulation of daring and of lofty endeavor, the homely work-a-day virtues and the heroic virtues—these are better still, and if they are lacking, no piled-up riches, no roaring, clanging industrialism, no feverish and many-sided activity shall avail either the individual or the nation. I do not under value these things of a nation's

body; I only desire that they shall not make us forget that besides the nation's body there is also the nation's soul.'

"I say 'Amen' to this sentiment, and to you, my fellow countrymen, that the noblest example of what the soul-life means, and what it will do for the world if put into practice, we witnessed tonight as we saw it re-enacted on the screen."

* * * * *

At last Peggy found herself alone in her luxurious room. The lights were out, the moon streamed through the window, her beautiful golden head sunk in a massive pillow, and she sobbed in her sleep as you have often heard a little child that had gone to its mother weeping and fallen asleep in her arms.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

PEGGY'S GETHSEMANE

PEGGY was glad to get away from Washington, where she had been the recipient of the most distinguished consideration. Her heart yearned for her own people, the simple folk who needed her. She appreciated the honors bestowed upon her in her nation's capitol, and was glad of the opportunity of giving the simple message to the world that she had learned in the solitude of her Southern mountains.

Christ said "they that are whole need not a physician." Peggy construed this as meaning that until a man realized his need of a physician, a teacher, it is useless to attempt to lead him into the light.

She knew that her mountain people were seeking the truth, and it was her supreme desire to share with them the light that burned ever more brightly for her.

She did not know the hungry hearts and longing souls of many of those in high places. If they had cared to remove their masks for a moment, what a tragic revelation it would have been to Peggy. She would have understood, as she learned later in life, that the same soul longing, the same need of the great physician, comes to prince and pauper alike, and when that longing comes, it obliterates all caste, all color, putting all mankind on the same footing.

She would have known that some time, somewhere this longing comes to every human soul, and when

once felt, there will never be a life worth while for that soul until it has found the road to salvation.

Peggy knew this road to salvation was a long and difficult one, for had she not trodden it, feeling that her feet were seemingly on the path, when lo, without warning, self would rise up in the way, blocking her passage with flaming sword. It was no wonder that Jesus said, "Narrow is the way, and few there be that find it."

Peggy's vision was to help as many as possible find the way on this plane in the present life, so that the thorny road to salvation might be shortened for as many souls as possible, for she felt that the millennium is possible only when the last soul has been saved.

Salvation meant saving a man or woman from the hell of self—from the flesh, the material man. She believed that our social and industrial problems will never be solved until we have first solved our problem of the soul's salvation.

It was to this work that she was bending every energy of her splendid young womanhood. How inadequate her work seemed as she reviewed it, journeying back to Bucks Pocket. Her soul cried out for more faith, more wisdom, more power.

"I need a new baptism of the Holy Ghost every day of my life," she whispered to herself as she contemplated the tremendous task of saving the world from its crass materialism.

She stopped in Chattanooga for a few hours awaiting the sailing of her steamer, for she wanted to enjoy once more the trip down the majestic Tennessee. To her great surprise she was met at the station by the Mayor and a big crowd of people. The camera men and reporters were also in evidence.

"Why do the people want to see me?" she asked the Mayor. "How did you know I would be on the train?"

"Miss Ware," he answered, "it is a tribute to your work, your life. Most of us are living for self, for money, but deep down in our souls we are not satisfied. We know that such a life can never bring peace, but we go on year in and year out, quaffing the draught that never satisfies, that only increases our thirst. When a great soul comes among us that has drunk of the water of life, we pay our homage, although we may not yet be ready to pay the price.

"We all know that we must do it by and by, but we wait to take one more quaff of our hell-brewed broth of self, until at last our throats become so parched, our hearts so scorched with the fires of materialism, that we cry out, 'Christ, give me the living water'.

"This answers your question as to why people want to see you.

"Your second question is also quite simple. You are now famous. You belong to the public, and every act of your life is of the greatest importance.

"When you left Washington, the news was flashed over the wires. They know in Bucks Pocket that you are here, that you have just stepped from the train and were met by the Mayor and an enthusiastic delegation of citizens."

"I think it's dreadful," said Peggy, "that I should attract so much attention. I am going back to Bucks Pocket and never leave it again."

"In that event, the world will come to you, Miss Ware," declared the Mayor. "When one has a message for the world, the world will come for it, if needs be."

It was difficult for Peggy to realize that she had really made herself an important figure in the world.

It had been so foreign to anything she had ever thought or dreamed of. In her vision she had never seen herself, and it was slowly dawning on her that she stood as an incarnation of her work to the public.

* * * * *

At last the steamer anchored at the wharf and she saw all the pupils of the Peggy Ware School, together with the population of Bucks Pocket there to greet her. Her heart responded with a great throb of thankfulness.

"It's so good to be back," she said, as she kissed Ralph, Virginia, and Molly Anderson. "I'd like to kiss every one of you, but it would take too long. I feel at home here, and don't ever want to leave again."

"They have been phoning telegrams from the railroad for a week," her father said, "from all over the country. They want you everywhere, to lecture, to preach, to act on the stage, and on the screen. It's wonderful, my child, and I thank God for you."

"I thank Him for such a father, such a brother, and such sisters," placing her arms about Ruth, Virginia, and Ralph, "and for such friends as Mr. Anderson, Doctor Weston, and Simon, and all of you. God bless every one of you. I love you," and the beautiful face was radiant as she smiled on the assembled throng.

"This is my other mother," she said, placing her cheek fondly against Molly Anderson's, "and these are your children," indicating the pupils of the Peggy Ware School. "I know you have been good to them while I was gone," she declared, looking at the happy, upturned faces.

"She sure does feed us," one little fellow with a big appetite volunteered, and a chorus of "You're right there, kid," left no doubt in Peggy's mind on this score.

"Tell us all about Washington, the President, and everything," said Ralph.

"That will take a long time," she said. "I will tell you a part of it each day, and you will have something to look forward to for many days."

It was a joyous throng that watched Anderson's big automobile as it sped away, carrying Peggy, the ideal of every man, woman, and child in Bucks Pocket.

"Winslow and Cranston are coming to film the wedding," Peggy said lightly. "They say they want it to complete their picture."

A painful silence greeted this announcement, which Peggy was at a loss to understand.

"I thought this would be fine," she said, addressing Ruth.

"Ruth has become obsessed, Peggy, by the fear that she is not your sister, that there may be some mistake about it. She wants the question settled beyond a doubt, she says, before she becomes my wife. It makes no difference to me, but when a woman gets a thing into her head, it's pretty hard to get it out."

"You said somethin' then, Doctor," declared Anderson. "Molly taught me that a long time ago."

"I know there is no doubt that Ruth is my sister," said Peggy. "She is just like my mother, and I feel that she is, and that's all the proof I need."

"But there were two children stolen at the same time," protested Ruth. "I may be the other one."

"You couldn't be the other one," said Mrs. Anderson, laughing. "You are just you."

"Why not make a blood test, Doctor Weston?" said Peggy. "You know that the Courts have accepted the blood test as absolute proof of parentage."

"I have been thinking of that just to satisfy Ruth,"

he said. "I care nothing about it myself, so I had not mentioned it."

"Oh, can you tell for sure?" exclaimed Ruth, greatly excited. "Tell me how you do it!"

"I will take a few drops of your blood," he explained, "and a few drops of your father's, and if the blood vibrates in unison then it will be proven beyond a peradventure."

"How wonderful," said the excited girl. "Won't you please make the test right away. I must know."

"Suppose the test should show that Mr. Ware is not your father?" suggested Doctor Weston. "What difference would it make?"

"Then I would not be obtaining property under false pretense," she said laughingly, "if you still persisted in marrying me."

"Persisted is good," said Weston, as all joined in the laugh that greeted Ruth's statement.

It was arranged that the test should be made at the sanatorium the next morning at nine o'clock. At the appointed hour, Ruth, Peggy, Cliff Anderson and his wife, Wilbur Ware, and Simon assembled in Doctor Weston's office to try the interesting experiment. It was a solemn occasion for all of them, and particularly so for Ruth.

There was but little conversation, and Doctor Weston silently prepared for the test. Ruth bared her arm, and a sufficient quantity of blood was drawn. From Wilbur Ware's arm a like quantity was taken, and then the test was arranged. Intently Weston watched the vibrations of the blood for a long time through his glass.

"It is identical," he said. "Look for yourselves."

Ruth was the first one to watch the uniform vibra-

tion, and the troubled look began to vanish from her face.

"Oh, I am so glad, so happy," she exclaimed. "I know now that you are my sister," she said, kissing Peggy. "My father, my noble father," she sobbed, "how my heart goes out to you. If my mother were here, what a happy family reunion it would be."

"Simon, I am so glad you are with us, too, because you are a part of the family," said Ruth, gently placing her hand on the old man's shoulder.

"I allus knowd you wus a Lee," said Simon, "an' I know my Young Missus is heah, too. I feels it. An' dey am lots more heah, too, ef we could open our eyes and see 'em."

As they gazed at the look of rapture on the old man's face, it was not hard to imagine that for him the veil was parted just a little way, allowing him to see his loved "white folks" who had passed over to the other side.

* * * * *

The wedding morning dawned bright and clear. It was to be the great gala day in the life of Bucks Pocket. The Governor of the State, and the Speaker of the Lower House of the Legislature were to be present. They had made the request that they be included in the list of invited guests.

Winslow and Cranston were already on the ground, preparing to film the wedding and all of its incidents, including the wedding supper to be served at the Anderson home, and the ball that was to follow.

The wedding ceremony was to take place in the Community Center Church, just as the sun was setting, and the invitation to the wedding included the entire population. Everybody was there. Two hours before time

for the wedding party to arrive, they began to come in wagons, buggies, on horseback and afoot.

Just as the last rays of the sun were glinting the highest peaks, Peggy began the wedding march, and the bridal party entered. Ruth was very beautiful in a fashionable gown.

"She is shore enough quality," muttered Simon. "She steps lak a race hoss, an' hol's her head lak a Lee."

Doctor Weston was as handsome as a Greek god, and his manner denoted the man of superior qualities of mind and heart.

Ralph and Virginia were happily excited as they watched the marriage of their beautiful sister to the distinguished Doctor Weston.

Wilbur Ware performed the ceremony, and Cliff Anderson gave the bride away.

When Doctor Weston placed the ring on Ruth's finger, his hand trembled so violently that it seemed he would never succeed in doing so. No one but Peggy understood the cause of his agitation. She saw that handsome face, white and drawn, and she knew that his soul was crying out for what could never be.

Her own soul called for his across an abyss so wide, so fathomless that she knew they must build for ages before the yawning gulf could be spanned.

Everyone was gone, and the last note of the wedding march had died away. Everyone except Peggy and Simon. He had stood in an alcove during the wedding ceremony, and from this vantage point had watched the people as they marched out.

Peggy turned and looked down the deserted aisles, but they were filled with the shadows of the coming

twilight. Her hands fell to her sides, while her head rested on the keys of the organ.

Simon, who was watching, thought she had fainted, and noiselessly as one of the shadows cast by the pine trees through the church windows, he stole to her side, placed his hand lightly on her shoulder, saying: "Chile, I'se heah, and so is God."

"And may He always be with us, Simon," said Peggy, looking wistfully toward the great forest to the west.

"I am going to write my father a note, Simon. You are to take it to him, and then go to your cabin and make me a cup of your best tea. I think I shall need it—and you, too, Simon," she added pathetically, as the old man turned away with a heavy heart to deliver the note she had hastily written.

Simon understood. No words were necessary between him and Peggy. Her every wish had always been to him a command, and now in the great crisis of her life, the faithful old man read her innermost thoughts, and suffered all the agony that wrung her soul.

When he had gone, she slipped out into the lengthening shadows, and went toward her Shrine of Silence. She must be alone with the only friend to whom she dared pour out the secret anguish of her soul.

Often she had gone to Him in perplexity, in doubt, sometimes in sorrow, and He had never failed her. To Him she could go in perfect confidence.

She entered the Shrine of Silence, closed the door, and knelt reverently, asking God to remove the pain from her heart. "I love him! I love him!" she cried. "Why did this cruel thing come into my life?"

"Why must I always sacrifice my own life for oth-

ers? What have I done to merit this cruel punishment?"

God was afar off, and no answer came to her selfish appeal.

Her throat was dry, her temples throbbed, her eyes ached with unshed tears. Involuntarily she reached out her hand, and it rested on her mother's Bible. It lay open upon the table, and a voice out of the shadows whispered, "read, read."

She picked it up, and had to hold it very close to her eyes, for the shadows were now filling the room. She read the first passage that encountered her vision.

"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. . . . And they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

She had not crucified self. This truth stood up before her, and mocked her. She had been flattering herself that Peggy Ware had long ago been nailed to the cross, but now her soul cried out, "Crucify! Crucify!"

"I will not be crucified," defiantly mocked the flesh. "Why should I surrender all to the soul?"

It was growing dark, and Peggy had not found God. Her own soul was overshadowed by a blackness greater than the night that now hung over the forest.

A feeling of fear crept into her heart. God had hidden His face from her, and when she could not see His face, she was afraid. She longed for human sympathy if God no longer heard her. She must have someone to whom she could pour out her grief.

There was but one person in the world to whom she could go, but one besides God, who had forsaken her.

She had one friend who knew without words. She

knew that Simon would understand without explanation. So would Hero. Hero could not speak, but he knew the language of sympathy, of brotherhood. She would get Hero and together they would go to Simon's cabin.

It was now the hour for the wedding dinner, the guests were seated, but there was one vacant chair. It was Peggy's. Everyone was anxiously inquiring about her, when Wilbur Ware arose and stated that he had received a note from Peggy begging to be excused from dinner, promising to be with them for the evening festivities. She had been called away, her father explained, on an important errand that would not wait.

A shadow of gloom settled over the party so bright and joyous just a moment before.

Peggy was the magnet, the soul, the sunshine of every gathering, and her absence, if but for a little while, left much more than her empty chair.

At least one of the diners divined the cause of Peggy's absence, and Doctor Weston had to be rallied by Ruth about his preoccupation more than once during the progress of the meal.

Peggy, on her way to Simon's cabin, went by Hero's kennel, and unfastened him. He greeted his mistress with joy, and tried to express in dog language his love for her. Together they entered the cabin where the old man sat gazing into the burning coals.

"I'se made you de grandes' cup ob tea you evah dranked,' he said. "It's ready to pour into your china cup, what nobody's evah used 'cept you. I bought it jest fer you," the old man said proudly, "an' when I am gone, I want you to allus keep it, an' when you drink yoah tea out ob it, think ob ol' Simon ovah on tother side watchin' every time de gate opens fer you to come in."

"I hope that will be a long, long time off," said Peggy, "for I seem to need you more and more as the time goes by. Tonight I need you, Simon, just as a little child needs its mother."

"Pore chile, pore deah," crooned the old man. "How I wish I could bear it all fer you. I'se so glad I come back frum de tother side dat time you called me, fer mebbe I kin say somethin' to help the hurt in yoah deah heart."

"Oh, Simon, Simon, I just can't stand it! My heart is breaking, breaking," sobbed Peggy.

Simon had never witnessed such uncontrollable grief. Peggy, his bright, joyous Peggy weeping. "Don' cry, chile, don' cry," the old man said. "I'd ruther die dan to see you weepin' dis way."

The flood gates of Simon's tears burst their bounds. He bowed his white head between his hands, and between his moans, sobbed, "God help dat pore li'l lamb, dat ain't evah done no harm in her life."

Hero began to whine piteously. His cry was almost human. The great tears fell from his eyes to the floor, and he looked pityingly at the tempest-tossed form of his mistress.

Peggy finally ceased to sob, and Simon quietly poured a cup of tea and set it on the table beside her, while Hero wagged his tail and kissed Peggy's hand.

"I guess I am just a little child, after all, Simon," she said, "wanting the moon. You have often told me how I used to cry for the moon when I was small," she said.

"Ef you could a had the moon, it would a stopped shinin'," the old man said. "Now ef you had what you want, the sun would stop shinin' fer lots ob folks."

"You see, eberybody lubes you, and eberyone thinks you lubes him de best. You is eberybody's sweet-

heart. Eben Hero thinks you lube him bettah dan you do me, an' I thinks you lube ol' Simon more'n you do anybody 'cept yore own folks.

"Ef you evah got married, course I knows you nevah thought about sech a thing—then eberybody would know who you lubed bes' an' you wouldn't be de worl's sweetheart no more."

"Yes, Simon, but it's so hard to crucify self," said Peggy. "I don't think I ever knew anyone but you that had done it successfully. I suppose that's why I come to you now when I feel that my old selfish self is about to get the upper hand. Tell me, Simon, how you did it."

"Chil', I ain't done it, not by myself. I had a heap o' help. When I wus stole away frum my daddy and mammy in Africa I wus full ob de devil an' I hated eberybody.

"Den by an' by, when I growed up an' married and had two ob de fines' pickaninnies you eber saw, an' my mastah sold my wife an' de babies an' de man whut bought 'em took 'em away an' I knowed I'd nevah see dem no moah, I had de debil, hell an' ebery evil thing in my heart. I wanted to kill. I laid out in de swamp fer a whole week, an' dey hunted me wid bloodhounds, an' finally dey ketched me. Den my mastah whopped me ontil I knowed he wus gwine to kill me, an' I shet my eyes an' say: 'Oh God, I gibs up; I'se whopped.'

"An' den I see an angel. Yes, I know it wus an angel standin' dah, an' I don't feel no moah pain, an' de whop seemed to me lak it was fallin' on somebody else, an' not on me.

"It wan't long ontil yore gran'fathah bought me an' I'se been in Heabin evah sence, an' I'se so thankful, I say, 'Lawd, I'se gwine to lib fer de folks what needs me fer de rest of mah life, an' Simon ain't no more.'

"But sometime, eben now, I wake up in de night de col' sweat standin' on my face, my fists shet, an' a-grittin' my teeth, an' my heart a-cryin' fer mah wife an' kids, an' I say: 'Lawd, dat's Simon 'sertin' hisself; help me nail him to de Cross an' keep him dah.'

"I recon' we'll nevah finish de job ontill we lay dis ol' self down an' fly ovah to de udder side."

"I think you are right, Simon. Your words are a great comfort to me, and now I am ready to go back to the world and let my light shine for all.

"Get your banjo, and go with me."

"I thank de Lawd," the old man said, as he picked up his banjo, and followed Peggy.

The ball had been a dull affair, the dancing mechanical. A splendid orchestra furnished music for the occasion, but the lively strains found no responsive chord in the hearts of the guests.

"If Peggy would come," they kept saying to each other.

"Here she is now," a dozen exclaimed at once.

The gloom was gone, and the sun had burst in all its noonday splendor. Peggy was radiant. No one had ever seen her so beautiful, or her eyes so glorious.

The Governor and half a dozen others claimed her for the next dance.

"I never learned to dance," she said laughingly. "These new-fangled dances are all beyond me."

"Then we will have the old Virginia reel," said the governor. "You can dance that with me."

"The second set is yours, Governor, the first one I must dance with Mr. Anderson."

"Then I'll ask Mrs. Anderson to dance this set with me," said the Governor.

"I make but one demand," said Peggy, "and that is that Simon pick his banjo for us to dance by. I could

not dance without Simon and his banjo," she said.

"Play Dixie, and I'll call the figures," shouted the Governor.

Simon tuned his banjo while the dancers waited impatiently. Then he struck up the wild strains of Dixie; the Governor called, "Honor your partners!" and the old Virginia reel was in full swing, Ruth and Doctor Weston leading, followed by Peggy and Cliff Anderson, and after them came the Governor and Molly Anderson.

Above the noise of shuffling feet and the strains of Simon's banjo, rang the laughter of Peggy, as joyous as the song of a nightingale.

"The sun will nevah quit shinin' no moah," Simon muttered to himself, as he saw the light in Peggy's face that told him she had won her final victory.

CHRIST LIVETH IN ME

“**S**IMON, you are looking younger than you did when we came to Bucks Pocket. I don’t believe you will ever grow older.”

Simon had been arranging the flowers on the table in Peggy’s Shrine of Silence, and she had entered just as he was saying to a beautiful rosebud: “You’s pow’ful sweet an’ beautiful dis mawnin’ an’ you’ll haf to do yore bes’ to shine wid Miss Peggy.”

The old man looked up, startled at being overheard talking to himself.

“Did you heah what I wus sayin’?” he inquired.

“Well, not exactly Simon,” Peggy replied, “but I know it was something beautiful, for it’s the only language you know.”

“If I knowse de beautiful language, it wus you taught most of it to me. I’s been libin’ wid yore flowers an’ in yore sunshine so long dat I des boun’ to git bettah an’ youngah as I grow oldah.”

“That’s a paradox, Simon,” declared Peggy laughing, “but it expresses a great truth. We should all grow younger in spirit as we grow older in years.”

“I don’t know nuffin’ erbout yore paraboxes, but I knowse dat eberybody an’ eberything in Bucks Pocket been doin’ des lak I is, an’ when we hab de big fair an’ show de worl’ des what change has took place, it gwine to be de mos’ pow’fulest lesson evah been.”

“I hope you are right, Simon, for I feel we are building on the sure foundation for all mankind, and now

we have made sufficient progress to hold a fair, where we shall give a living demonstration of what right thinking will accomplish, for all these things have been born in the Spiritual or thought world, which after all, is the world of reality."

"It's all so wond'ful, so wond'ful," Simon exclaimed, reverently. "Ef you could des gib de whol' worl' what you given to de folks in dese mountains, dey would all lub God an' one annudah. Ef dey could undahstand about de crucifixion, lak you wus readin' one day; but dey don't. I wish you would read dat agin fer me."

Peggy picked up her mother's Bible and read the passage: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

"He mus' a-been talkin' erbout you," the old man mused, "fer you have been crucified, an' you shore do lib by faith."

"Ah, Simon, I have had my battles, and you know about some of them; and I have many more ahead of me."

"Wall, dey won't be so hard no moah, becasse de sun been shinin' now fer five yeahs, an' dey ain't nevah been one cloud as big as yoah han'."

Peggy laughed joyously. "I know what you mean, Simon. That was my biggest battle. It's been five years, and I have tried to keep the sun shining ever since.

* * * * *

"My name is Peggy Ware Weston, an' dis is my hossy," lisped a blue-eyed, golden haired fairy perched on the back of Hero, "an' I'se three years old today, an' my mamma promised me ef I would be dood I could tum up here and wide Hero for a burfdays pres-

ent. My daddy holded me on, an' he tum to de door wif me."

Simon lifted little Peggy from Hero's back, and she climbed on Peggy's knee.

"I wish you many happy returns, Miss Peggy Ware Weston, and I hope you will always be as good and happy as you are today."

"Amen to dat," said the old darky.

"My mammy says she wants me to be des like my Auntie Peggy," the little child declared.

"And your Aunty Peggy wants to be just like you," Peggy said, kissing the child's golden head.

"So does I, an' I 'spec dat why you say I'se lookin' youngah," the old man declared, as he mounted Peggy Weston on her "hossy," and they took their departure down the trail, little Peggy looking back occasionally, waving goodbye with one hand as she clung to Hero with the other.

The opening day of the Peggy Ware School Fair arrived, and with it thousands of people came from the surrounding country. Many visitors were in attendance from the near-by cities, and a few from far away parts of the world.

The Governor of Alabama was one of the chief figures, and had promised to deliver an address on the opening day.

The boys' band, composed of pupils of the school, was the most celebrated in the state, and when the governor arrived, he was greeted with the strains of "Hail to the Chief," followed by "Dixie" and "The Star Spangled Banner."

The various exhibits were open to the visitors, and even those who had been intimately associated with the development of Bucks Pocket were surprised at the progress that had been made.

A reproduction of Cliff Anderson's Wild Cat distillery was shown, the covered wagon drawn by a yoke of oxen in which the Wares entered Bucks Pocket. The old "Hard Shell" meeting house was rebuilt, as well as a cabin in which one of the lonesome souls was confined.

There were old fashioned spinning wheels and hand looms, coonskin caps, long squirrel rifles, and hunting horns.

A cabin had been built, an exact reproduction of the Wilbur Ware cabin with its puncheon floor, stick and dirt chimney, with Peggy's attic room, the "Georgia" bedstead and straw tick.

The ox cart, the crude farming implements were all on exhibition.

The beginning of Peggy's school was shown, with Peggy teaching the old folks how to spell and write their names.

There was a great exhibit showing the improvement in agriculture, in horticulture, in handicraft work.

The transposition stage from the ox cart to the automobile was suitably expressed. A procession of the "old" and the "new" was reviewed by the Governor, headed by a few veterans of the Civil War wearing the Confederate gray, carrying a tattered Confederate battle flag, followed by a company of Peggy Ware School boys clad in the khaki uniform of Uncle Sam.

Marching behind these came boys and girls, some barefooted, some wearing brogans, all dressed in the homespun garments, ill fitting, poorly made, of the old days in Bucks Pocket, and then came the hundreds of boys and girls of the Peggy Ware School clad in their tasty, neat fitting uniforms.

When the marchers were seated, the exercises were opened by Wilbur Ware, who offered a fervent prayer

of thanksgiving, after which he introduced the Governor of Alabama.

"This is the most significant gathering I have ever attended," he said, "and if I spoke until the sun goes down I could not say one-half that is in my heart to say about the Peggy Ware School, and those who have helped in this wonderful work."

Briefly he sketched the work from the beginning, its growth and far-reaching influence, paying a lofty tribute to Peggy Ware as well as those who had so nobly aided in the work.

"I am especially interested because of the class of people being reached by the Peggy Ware School and its allied activities. I love these mountains and mountain people. I am one of them, and speak their language. I know the goodness of their hearts, the longing of their souls, their unflinching, undying loyalty to any cause they may espouse.

"They gave the world its greatest example of heroism and sacrifice when for four long years they fought for what they believed was a great principle, often hungry, half clad, leaving the blood prints on the frozen ground from their bare feet. When the noble Lee surrendered, he told General Grant that his men had had nothing to eat but parched corn for several days, and that gallant chieftain opened his commissaries to the half-starved Confederates.

"When France sent up the Macedonian cry for help, Alabama sent the most dashing, daring soldiers that fought for the cause of righteousness, and your own mountain boys were always first over the top.

"The Peggy Ware School is teaching the love of country, the love of our glorious Constitution. I declare most solemnly that in no part of the United States is there a more loyal people to our National Govern-

ment than in the South. It is the most distinctively American section of the land. We have no English-Americans, German-Americans, Irish-Americans, but just plain Americans, who can respond as one man to the sentiment, 'My country, right or wrong, but still my country.'

"We have no room in the South for Bolsheviks, Anarchists and other wild-eyed, half-baked Americans who would destroy our civilization by undermining the very foundations on which our Government stands.

"If the time ever comes when a Godless army marches under a red flag shouting, 'Down with the Government,' the South, still filled with the spirit of idealism, of love of country, of faith in God, will rally as one man around the Stars and Stripes, and in that hour God have mercy on the hosts of disorder and destruction, when these mountain boys give the rebel yell, and charge as their sires did at Gettysburg, or as they did on the bloody fields of France, shouting: 'For God and Country!'

"I pray this day may never come, and if the spirit of the Peggy Ware school can pervade every nook and corner of our beloved land, this great tragedy will not take place."

The Governor took his seat amidst great applause, the band playing "America."

As the last note died away, Cliff Anderson, bearing a huge bouquet of roses, approached the platform where Peggy sat.

"I tried to git somebody else to do the talkin', but they put it on me," he said. "An' I guess I'm gittin' like a well broke ol' hoss. I work anywhare they hitch me.

"This bowkay, Miss Peggy, has a rosebud from every member of the Peggy Ware School, an' one frum

every citizen of Bucks Pocket, an' each bud means more love than I could carry on my back.

"I told 'em I couldn't make no speech, an' I guess they know it now."

Peggy was greatly affected, and could scarcely find her voice. "Your speech, Mr. Anderson, is just as eloquent as the gift is beautiful. I can only say, 'God bless you, one and all.'"

"I am going to ask for reports from some of my helpers," said Peggy, "on the progress made in their departments. We will now hear from Dr. Weston."

"We have no more 'lonesome folks'," he declared. "They have all been cured and our sanatorium has been converted to other purposes. We won't need it any more, for we have removed the causes that brought on the disease.

"We have no sickness, for right thinking and right living means the elimination of so-called disease. We have taught the boys and girls, and even the older people, how to consciously renew and rebuild their bodies as well as their brains, and by and by you will hunt in vain for an old man or woman.

"Growing old is a habit, and we have got out of it. A man should retain all his vigor and faculties unimpaired until he is a century old, at least, and probably much longer. When he has fulfilled his work here, his soul will long for release, and he will go over on the other side.

"The Bible tells us that Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

"We are walking with 'good,' by scientific, right thinking, and when we reach the end of the journey, God will just take us.

"Our scientific brain and body building needs no

other advocate than these boys and girls whom you see before you today."

"Our distinguished friend, Mr. Winslow, will tell us about the motion picture industry," said Peggy, as the well known author stepped to the front of the platform.

"From fourth place in importance, the motion picture industry now ranks first in the industrial and artistic world. Tremendous changes have taken place since you saw your first exhibit in Bucks Pocket. The producers of indecent, unwholesome, suggestive pictures have been driven from the field, and today, no picture is made that is not fit to exhibit in any home, school or church in the land. The people engaged in the industry today are just as honest, just as respectable, just as wholesome as our preachers, bankers, lawyers, doctors and other professional or business men. The business has been taken out of the speculative field, and placed on a sound commercial basis. The little two-by-four stars that formerly received more money per week than the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court gets as a year's salary, now twinkle no more, or if they have survived, they don't draw quite as much salary as the President of the United States.

"The reign of graft, waste, and corruption is over, and as a consequence, pictures are being produced on the same basis as a beautiful house would be built; and the people can see the best pictures produced for a reasonable price, and the public is not bled for the benefit of the class who heretofore reveled in luxury and vice that such luxury usually brings.

"We have found many real actors and actresses, and today we are not confined to a few high-priced stars for our leading characters. Much of the teaching in

schools is now done through pictures, and all the churches exhibit them.

"Moving pictures are a greater factor for good today than any other one agency in the world, and I am tempted to say, than all others combined."

"My father will tell us about the work of the Community Centers," said Peggy.

"We have an even hundred Community Centers now," stated Wilbur Ware, "where we have our Sunday Schools, our church service, our lectures, and in general all gatherings for the public welfare. On Sunday evenings we always have a high class picture show at a price that makes it possible for everyone to attend.

"In the Peggy Ware School, we teach the highest dramatic art, and many of our boys are finished orators and others of our pupils develop into real actors and actresses. So when they go back to their homes, they become leaders in the Community Center work, and we now have many preachers, teachers and actors. They are helping to make life over in these hundred communities.

"We have no creed, no dogma, in our churches. We teach that there is but one road to salvation, and that is the road that leads to the crucifixion of the animal man, and the exaltation of the soul. The road to salvation is not an easy one, and all so-called plans of salvation that invite to flowery paths are false trails and lead to nowhere.

"Salvation means wholeness in body, mind and spirit. It means joy, peace, prosperity and the vast storehouse of God, wide open to all who desire to enter. It is heaven here and now, instead of in some far away future.

"We teach men and women to be brave and fearless.

No painted devil of their childhood's fancy with forked tail and iron pitchfork can harm them, but only the devil of self can bring evil to them.

"And above all, we tell them that only God can satisfy the hungry, longing soul.

"It would require volumes to recount the good that has been accomplished in these communities, and our message to the world is 'Come and see'."

"I know we all want to hear from Mr. Anderson," said Peggy, and the crowd set up a lusty call for 'Anderson! Anderson!' He was the hero of the boys, and a romantic figure to the girls.

"I ain't got nothin' to say about myself," he declared, "cept that I was blind before Miss Peggy came to Bucks Pocket, an' now I am beginnin' to see a little bit.

"I've seen it change from the Wild Cat still and mean lickster to this big school house an' the fines' set of boys an' gals in Alabama. I've seen the old trail leadin' out of the Pocket change to the finest road in the State, over which the King and Queen of Belgium traveled to Bucks Pocket, an' we have named it the 'Royal Highway.'

"We have harnessed the water of Sauty Creek an' it's turnin' machinery an' furnishin' electric lights to the farmers fur miles an' miles. I guess I could stan' here an' talk to you until you'd all git tired of hearin' me, fur it's the only subject I kin speak on without gittin' the 'buck aguer.'

"So I'll quit by sayin' back of it all is Miss Peggy Ware, who is one of God's angels He sent down here to lead us out of our ignorance."

"These reports fill my soul with gratitude," declared Peggy. "There are many others who have aided in the work. I should like to hear from all of them, but time

will not permit. Mrs. Anderson has played a big part and so has Ruth. You know of their work, and all join me in doing honor to them.

"There is one other person whom I want to publicly honor today before this vast assemblage of people. You all know and love Uncle Simon. I am going to give him a bouquet of these beautiful roses from the one you gave me, as a token of our love, and esteem for a man of another race whose life marks him as a Son of God."

"Let me tarry it to him," said Peggy Junior, "'tause I love him, too."

Peggy gave her the bouquet, and she carried it to the back of the platform where Simon sat, handed it to him, made a neat little curtsy as she said: "Dis is 'tause we loves you des as dood as if you warn't black."

The old man rose, trembling visibly, the roses in his upraised hand. Little Peggy, holding the other hand, led him to the front of the stage. The tears were coursing down his black cheeks, and his voice was shaking with emotion.

"White folks," he said, and it was a long time before he could go on. "White folks, when we all git up yondah, an' you treat me as good as you do heah, it'll be all de heabin I wants."

The audience rose to its feet as one man, and stood for a moment in silent homage to the venerable old man whose childhood harked back to the jungles of Africa.

"I will speak just a few words," Peggy declared, "and then we will sing the national anthem. We sing it every morning at the opening of our school, and I don't believe there is an audience in the United States

that can sing it with more of the spirit of understanding than this one.

"The work done here speaks for itself more loudly and more eloquently than could a thousand tongues such as mine. Of that work I will say naught, but of the foundation on which it rests I would speak briefly.

"The foundation on which we have built is God and the Constitution, with Christ as the chief cornerstone and faith as the pilot, and vision as our guiding star. Our port of destination is called compensation, and in that port we will each find his suitable reward.

"I hold that we grow into the likeness and image of our vision, and that through faith the very portals of heaven are open to us, and all that belongs to the Father is ours.

"We believe in the Divinity of Jesus, and also in the Divinity of our boys and girls. This is why I make bold to say that all things belong to us.

"We owe to the sacred Constitution written by our forefathers the glorious privilege of working out our destinies here in Bucks Pocket, and therefore, I put it as one of the foundation stones of our institution. It is the bulwark of our liberties. It is the beacon light of the world's struggling humanity. It is the fortification that stands against the assaults of those who would destroy our individual liberties, the sacredness of our homes, and the holiness of the marriage tie.

"It is the banner high over all, under which we can rest in peace and security, worshiping God and promulgating to the world the teachings of Jesus Christ.

"Destroy our Constitution and civilization will go back into the dark ages. Uphold it, and unfurl our banner to all the world on which is written in imperishable letters, 'God and the Constitution,' and beneath

its ample folds all mankind can find the road to salvation and to God.

"We will now sing America, and I want every soul here to take part."

Little Peggy was perched on Simon's shoulder, a tiny flag in her hand, and as the audience sang, each one waved the stars and stripes, and high above the others could be seen the flag held in her tiny hand by Peggy Ware Weston.

"My country 'tis of thee,
Sweet Land of Liberty,
Of thee I sing:
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrim's pride,
From every mountainside,
Let freedom ring."

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